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ABSTRACT

This study presents an overview and analysis of the continuing debate in the United Nations system on freedom of the press and the distribution of information. The three main chapters deal with sequences within that history. The first chapter discusses the debate on Freedom of Information which was pursued, particularly at the United Nations, in the years after World War II; it is based partly on source material collected at that time and documents a little known period of this information debate. The second chapter summarizes the theme of Unesco's work in the field, particularly in the 1970s; its context is the emerging discussion of a new world information and communication order. Finally, the report traces the development of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), from its origin to the present day. It is concluded that the most demanding challenge for media policies in democratic countries is providing for a media structure that will ensure the freedom of journalists in relation to both government censorship and the dictatorship of profit. (JB)

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Communication and Society 15

A World of Difference

The International Distribution of Information: The Media and Developing Countries

by
Gunnar Garbo

Unesco

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A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

The International Distribution of Information :

The Media and Developing Countries

by

Gunnar Garbo

COM-85/WS-7

translated by
Gail Adams Kvam

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For most of his professional life Gunnar Garbo has been deeply involved in the related fields of international affairs and communication.

Beginning his career as a journalist in Norway, after the Second World War, he became a Member of the Norwegian Parliament in 1958, where he represented Bergen until 1973. In 1974, he was appointed Guest Researcher at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, and in the same year became Deputy Director General at the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. Associated for many years with the Venstre Party, he served as its Chairman from 1964 - 1970, and was Parliamentary Leader from 1972 - 73. He was also a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Nordic Council and of its Cultural Committee, from 1969 - 73.

Mr. Garbo has had a long association with the United Nations, and especially with Unesco, serving on the Unesco Executive Board from 1974 - 78. In 1979, he became Chairman of the Norwegian Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), and was subsequently Vice President of the Conference.

He was elected Chairman of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) in 1981, and re-elected for a further term in 1983. He was Chairman of the Norwegian Government's Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament, and has written extensively on disarmament and development issues, international affairs and international communication.

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Preface

This study, written by Gunnar Garbo, Chairman since 1981 of the International Programme for the Development of Communication, is extracted from a longer text originally prepared for Norwegian audiences, describing the international debate on information and communication.

Its three main chapters deal with sequences within that history with which the author is familiar through personal experience. The first deals with the debate on Freedom of Information which was pursued, particularly at the United Nations, in the years after World War II ; it is based partly on source material collected by Mr. Garbo at the time, and documents a relatively little known period of the information debate. The second chapter takes up the better known theme of Unesco's work in the field, mostly in the seventies ; its context is the emerging discussion of a new world information and communication order. Finally, the author traces the development of the IPDC, the International Programme for the Development of Communication, from its origins to the present day, before drawing together his impressions in a short conclusion.

The study is a personal account, by an author with a continuing and direct involvement in the debate. As such, it offers an unusual insight into its form and substance, from an insider's perspective. It is emphasized, however, that the opinions expressed in the study, and the choice and presentation of its contents, are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent the views of Unesco.

INTRODUCTION

Although there are strongly diverging views in the world today on the right of governments to influence the contents of the mass media, there is widespread agreement that the media have certain responsibilities towards society. For instance, the media declaration, which was adopted unanimously at the 20th General Conference of Unesco in 1978, mentions that the mass media can contribute considerably to strengthening peace and international understanding by promoting human rights, serving as a spokesman for oppressed peoples, eliminating ignorance and misunderstanding among peoples and drawing attention to the evils which plague humanity, such as poverty, malnutritrion and disease. The declaration emphasizes particularly the fact that the mass media have an important role to play in educating young people in an atmosphere of peace and understanding. The Talloires declaration of 1981, adopted by leaders of independent Western news organizations, also refers to these goals : "We believe that the free flow of information and ideas is essential for mutual understanding and world peace".

Media policies in authoritarian societies do not lend themselves to open criticism of governments. The independence of the mass media is to a certain extent dependent on their willingness not to oppose the country's political leadership. In these societies, moreover, the mass media have become one of the most important instruments the government uses to "shape the individual".

In the developed democracies, a liberal media ideology prevails on the whole. The traditional key concept in this ideology is the expectation that truth will triumph through a free exchange of opinions. Thus a central principle is that the media must be independent of the political authorities, and a varied structure of ownership ought to be provided for. The formulations of the responsibilities of the media which follow have been taken from societies which proclaim this tradition. The liberal school of thought has gradually incorporated elements of what has been called the ideology of responsibility.

In 1947, the US Commission on the Freedom of the Press formulated five responsibilities of the media, on which it believed there was broad agreement among American journalists. These responsibilities were to convey a

truthful, encompassing and intelligent report of daily occurrences in a context which made them meaningful, to be a forum for the exchange of commentary and criticism, to give an adequate picture of various groups in society, to explain the aims and values of society, and to provide complete access to relevant information.

Similar objectives have been formulated in Sweden . The Swedish press report of 1972 states :

"Democratic values must have a central place in Swedish media policies. The mass media are to contribute to strengthening and extending Sweden's democracy... From this standpoint we can conclude that the mass media ought to fulfill four primary functions. They should :

1) convey comprehensive information ;
2) comment on various occurrences in society ;
3) keep vigilance over and inquire into various power factors in society, and
4) provide the opportunity for communication within and between organized groups in society".

In Norway, similar summaries of the media's responsibilities have been drawn up. In the programme instruction for NRK (the Norwegian broadcasting corporation) established in 1975, article 1 reads as follows :

> "The purpose of NRK is to spread information and culture to the entire population of Norway. NRK's sole right to (nation-wide) radio and television broadcasting imposes a special responsibility on the institution for objective, unbiased and comprehensive information in its programmes. An important responsibility is to arouse interest in social questions and provide opportunities for experience and entertainment".

Various Norwegian commissions on the press have also contributed to describing the societal responsibilities of the media. The representatives of the media on the Newspaper and Periodical Postage Rates Committee in 1973 called attention to the contribution of the press to fulfilling the government's need for information, the significance of the press in the democratization process, the role of the press as a unifying factor in the perspective of regional development policies, and the significance of the press for the further education of the adult population. In addition, the Royal Commission on the Press that

same year mentioned the role of newspapers in political communication, as social critics and spokesmen for political movements, as well as the importance of newspapers to the business world. A majority in the Government Administration Committee of the Storting (Parliament) supported these views, expressing in terms similar to those of the Swedish commission on the press that "Norwegian media policies must have as their foremost objective to strengthen and further develop our democratic system of government. The main functions of the press must be to provide comprehensive information and to provide for commentary, vigilance and investigation.

Let us close this discussion with another example of how the press themselves describe the responsibilities of the media. The code of ethics of the Norwegian Press Association begins as follows : "A free press has important responsibilities in our society in the way of disseminating information, debate and social criticism. It is the right of the press to inform the public of what happens in society and to disclose conditions which are worthy of criticism. It cannot give in to pressure from anyone who attempts to obstruct the free spread of information, free access to sources or open debate. At the same time, the press has a responsibility for ensuring that varying viewpoints are expressed to a reasonable degree".

A striking characteristic of these descriptions is the fact that a major aspect of the media's activities is hardly mentioned. We hear little or nothing about how the mass media function as an entertainment industry. In statements of programme objectives the democratic responsibilities of the media are emphasized -information, debate and criticism,and there is an almost astonishing degree of consensus as to these objectives. To recapitulate, there is broad agreement within the liberal media tradition that the purpose of the mass media is to perform an informational role which strengthens the democratic process.

This object of media policy provides a good starting point for discussing some of the central problems which developments in the media sector are causing at present throughtout the world. Such a discussion should be undertaken in relation to a number of issues which have been the subject of a considerable amount of research : the effects of media violence, the effects of the sex

role patterns presented in the media, the effects of increased freedom of choice and the effects of new media on development in rural communities. If we are to be able to form opinions on the international information debate, it is necessary to know how the media function in relation to their objectives in areas such as these.

Much research has shown that violent elements in the visual media increase the level of physical violence in society, that mass media throughout the world convey an image of women which as a rule counteracts efforts to attain equality between the sexes, and that the information which has been spread for the purpose of stimulating development has been of use first and foremost to those who need it the least.

This is a simplified representation. It does not leave room for exceptions and nuances. But it shows that in crucial areas the activities of the modern media run counter to the purposes they are intended to serve. At the same time, available research shows that an increase in programme options in the way of video, cable television and satellites threatens to undermine the variety and quality in the consumption of media to an even greater extent.

A joint meeting of the Catholic and Protestant church councils in Switzerland issued a statement in 1983 in which the problem is described in the following manner :

"Widening the range of programmes, increasing the competition between broadcasting services and offering an unlimited amount of information which the user can call upon at will -none of this in itself is a positive innovation. On the contrary, there are signs that show that it suppresses inter-personal communication and reinforces cultural differences in society and the imbalances between North and South. In the light of experience, pressure of competition in electronic media causes a decline in programme standards and not an improvement in editorial quality. Unlimited expansion of media based on commercial interests can threaten the existence of important communication means such as the local press or specialist publications. The increasing flood of information, with its tendency towards hastily transmitted, badly presented news, encourages consumers to become lazy and superficial. So despite increasing information flow consumers know less and less.

Against this background, the Swiss church meeting maintained that responsibility for the media cannot be limited to certain occupational groups or institutions, but that it rests on all of society.

It is remarkable that it is necessary at all to demonstrate that media violence is harmful. The first American commission on violence pointed out that television is an important means of learning and socialization. It would be surprising if American children did not learn something about social interaction from the eleven thousand murders they watch on television before the are fifteen years old. Television networks find that it is profitable for business to spend billions of dollars on television advertising to sell their goods and services. It is not convincing when the same networks deny that violent episodes have any effect on the viewers. Actually, very strong scientific documentation would have to be provided to disprove the common sense supposition that : violence in the media is harmful. This sort of documentation does not exist. On the contrary, there are extensive, reliable research results which support the conclusion reached by healthy common sense -that people become more violent through experiencing media violence.

Although we have far from enough research data on the treatment of women in the media, especially in regions other than North America and Western Europe, it is obvious that the mass media on the whole continue to accentuate discriminating perceptions of sex roles. Alternative models are relatively seldom depicted, and modern feminist thinking has not been influential in the entertainment sector. These effects are reinforced by the way in which women appear and participate in the mass media : their roles tend to have neither status nor power. The mass media thus mirror the established patterns of the society in which they exist. They also contribute to prolonging the longevity of these patterns.

The Swedish media researcher Ivar Ivre points out that it is the sum of all the individual choices which determine whether a media system functions in accordance with the values on which it is founded. His study shows that increased freedom of choice in Sweden has been utilized in a manner which conflicts with the express purpose of the system. The correlation between choice and the utilization of democratic and culturally valuable programmes has become increasingly more negative. Freedom of choice has become a threat : it has

become a destructive element in relation to the media system which is intended to strengthen and broaden democratic values. Ivre's report for the Swedish broadcasting system presents a challenge to society to meet this threat in an era in which the overwhelming degree of choice in cheap film and fiction programmes may yet increase even further with the development of video, pay TV and satellite transmission.

The results of communication development projects suggest that modern media can only reach the poorest groups and contribute to reducing the gaps in knowledge and income if they are used in a conscious way with this goal in mind. This requires that the poorest groups be guaranteed access to the media. The message must be conveyed in terms they can understand. It must also be ensured that the educational programmes contain precisely the information that the poorest, and not the richest people, need and of which they can make use. In other words, there is a need for communication which is aimed to the greatest possible extent at the particular needs of the individual community. And interaction is needed between modern and traditional media, between mass communication and oral dissemination.

Recent research in the social sciences has drawn our attention to the total picture of the world around us conveyed by the electronic media. How does this picture tally with the world of reality ? How does it affect people's understanding of reality ?

A group of American researchers under the leadership of George Gerbner have analysed the contents of American television programmes for over fifteen years. They have found that in the world of television there are at least three times as many men as women. Young people account for only one-third and the elderly for only one-fifth of their true proportion of the population. Minority groups take part less on the screen than off it, but they get more than their share of the risks. Blue collar workers and service workers, who make up 60 per cent of the American working population, account for only 10 per cent of the working population on the television screen. The world according to television is a world of high status men.

Over half of the characters in the fiction programmes on American television are between 25 and 45 years of age. About 30 per cent of the popu-

lation in the United States is under the age of 30, but this age group accounts for only 8 per cent on television. People over 65, who make up 11 per cent of the population, represent only 2.3 per cent in the fiction programmes. This composition according to age correlates well with the consumer groups in which the advertisers are most interested.

Particularly thought-provoking is the way in which older persons are treated by television. More women than men in their twenties are shown, but in somewhat older age groups there are four or five times as many men as women : attractive young women for well-established men. Women age more rapidly on television than men do, too. They are often depicted as old at an age in which men are more often still shown as active and vital. Two-thirds of the older women in television fiction, as compared to one-half of the older men, are portrayed as foolish, silly or odd. A recurring feature is the fact that the older television characters are treated disrespectfully much more often than any other age group. Approximately 70 per cent of older men and more than 80 per cent of the older women are treated impolitely or indifferently.

During prime broadcasting time, the average American television viewer sees three hundred persons on the screen each week on the average. Twenty-one of them are criminals, and 44 are representatives for the police or law enforcement. According to criminal statistics in the United States, every tenth crime is a violent crime. In the world of television, violent criminals account for four-fifths of the crimes. Americans watch six acts of violence per hour during prime time. In weekend programmes for children, this figure increases to 25 acts of violence per hour.

On the average, the television set is on in American home for between six and seven hours a day. Do all the viewers manage to differentiate between the world of reality and the picture of reality they see on television ? Or is their own understanding of reality -and thus their own behaviour- influenced by the impressions made by television ? In other words : is it possible that television will change reality, so that it becomes more like some of the characteristics on the screen ?

In Venezuela, Colomina de Rivera found that half of the housewives in Marcaibo believed that the soap operas they listened to on the radio were rooted

in real life and that they could benefit from the experiences on the radio to solve their own problems. A Brazilian study reached a similar conclusion. The typical course of these radio "novelas", which usually run to become marathon serials, is that a poor girl from the country gets a job as a maid in the city, gets pregnant, but conquers the difficulties and finally marries happily.

The psychologist Santoro studies the stereotypes Venezuelan children adopted by watching television. 86 per cent of the time the child's hero was North American, whereas only 8 per cent of the time was the hero Venezuelan. Eighty-two per cent of the children's heroes spoke English, and only 15 per cent spoke Spanish. For every child who mentioned a coloured hero there were eleven who mentioned white heroes. Seventy-two per cent of children's heroes were rich. This sort of ideal, then, can become established by means of television among children in a poor developing country, where 80 per cent of the population is coloured and only a small minority understand English.

When Gerbner's research group in the United States compared people who watched much and those who watched little television, they found that the programmes had a tendency to strengthen typical prejudices and inequalities rather than counteracting them.

Those who watched a lot of television were less likely than the others to believe that women are just as suited for positions of leadership as men. They were more likely to be opposed to coloured people living in the same areas as white people, they had a stronger tendency to consider older people a vanishing breed, and on the whole they were more inclined to answer the survey in a way the researchers perceived as sexist, racist or characterized by contempt for old age. The researchers also found that the more children or adults watched television, the more poorly they were likely to perform in school or on IQ tests and the lower were their ambitions as far as education was concerned.

The more people watch television -particularly young people- the more likely they are to form a negative and unfavourable picture of old people and their lives. The researchers could not find the slightest correlation between television viewing and positive attitudes towards old people. Those who watch a lot of television have the impression that older people have poor

health and badly organised finances, that they have stopped having any sexual activity, are near-sighted and poor at getting things done. At the same time television teaches young people that people get old at an early age, especially women.

Violent episodes are in the last analysis a demonstration of power, this group of researchers maintains. Violent films show who has the power to do what to whom. Exposure to violent scenes reinforces the viewers' feelings of their own powerlessness, of their being vulnerably situated in the social arena. The result is increased fear and insecurity in relation to a reality which is shown to be meaner and more dangerous than people have experienced in real life. This sort of uncertainty leads to demands for protection, to dependence on the authorities and to less resistance to oppressive measures which are justified in the name of security.

Gerbner and his group point out that television has become a dominant influence in every single American home. Television reports hour after hour what is going on in the world, how things work and how people behave. Gerbner concludes that the more people live in the world of television, the more they adopt this picture of the world.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has sponsored a survey of ten years of research on the effects of television on individuals and on society. The results of this survey lead to the same conclusions as Gerbner's research, although they are expressed with greater caution. The survey establishes that television influences people's understanding of reality in an interplay with other types of influence. The research in question particularly furnishes support for the fact that television affects society as far as violence and suspicion between individuals are concerned. Likewise, the survey finds considerable evidence that television influences social reality in terms of sexism, attitudes towards ageing and sex role patterns in the family.

The data and studies which have been referred to above come mainly from the United States. It would, however, be dangerous to think that they have limited validity for that reason. The United States has led the way in the development of the electronic media, American programmes are dominant among

television films imported into the developing countries, and the American programme style is imitated in other countries. Not all of the American experiences can be applied to Eastern Europe or to certain other countries with government controlled economies. It is obvious that violent films and superficial entertainment have much less room in the media in some of these countries than in American and Western European media. On the other hand, political criticism and the oppositional voices in public debate are missing. But in most of the world the media are affected by what is cooked in the American melting pot. For that reason, experiences from the United States are valid for better or for worse far beyond their own borders.

The mass media do not simply reflect reality. They also take an active part in moulding and changing it. According to the media philosophy which is upheld by both journalists and authorities in the Western world, the media have a responsibility to convey realistic information, critical debate and consideration for democratic values. It is also in their power to do so. Modern means of communication can provide immense possibilities if they are used in a well thought out and purposeful manner. But studies show, too, that freedom for commercial exploitation of the electronic media may increase the level of violence, strengthen prejudices and weaken consciousness of cultural and social values.

It is not the number of choices in the media that determines whether a media system fulfills its responsibilities, but media consumption. Experience has shown that increased choice can on the contrary reduce the variety and the quality of the consumption. Research also presents irrefutable evidence that it is the members of a population having the least economic, social and cultural resources who first and foremost choose other programmes than those which provide learning and cultural experiences. It is the weak who are the losers when a media system is increasingly governed by considerations of profitability. They are the ones who become the victims of speculation in crime and violence. No country, whether it is an industrialized country or a developing country, can make rational choices regarding the expansion of its own media system without taking these experiences into consideration.

I. INTERNATIONAL MEDIA POLICIES : ATTEMPTS AND FAILURES

It is a long time since the first attempts were made to establish international agreements on the conditions for the dissemination of words and pictures across national boundaries. These attempts fall roughly into two categories. The first group concerns technical measures to ensure that the international distribution can be carried out in an efficient manner. The most important results of this work are the Universal Postal Union and the International Telecommunication Union. The other group concerns attempts to establish rules for the contents to be distributed. Is there to be complete freedom for those who have the opportunity to spread the words and pictures they choose, not only within their own country, but also to other countries ? Or should limits on the freedom of information be adopted ? And -this is the crux of the matter- where should these limits be set ?

In the following pages these questions will be considered. In particular, we shall consider the comprehensive attempt which was made during the first five or six years of the existence of the United Nations to work out an international code on the freedom of expression and the international distribution of information. This attempt culminated in the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information in Geneva in 1948. After that it dwindled to nothing.

But first, let us take a look further back in history. During the peace conference in Paris in 1918, influential Americans made a proposal that the Versailles peace treaty should include provisions for open telecommunications among and between the parties to the treaty, for freedom of the press and independent news agencies. Nothing came of this proposal. On the contrary, Germany's defeat resulted in the British and French news agencies Reuters and Havas dividing between them the foreign market of the German news agency Wolff.

As a general rule, it may be stated that economic political and market interests were behind the changing positions adopted by the dominating powers on free flow issues during the first half of this century. France first argued against the monopoly position of the British agency, and Germany and USA later spoke out against the British/French news dissemination cartel, with arguments which were strikingly similar to Third World claims to-day for a new and more equitable information order.

Most of the early attempts at multilateral agreements on questions concerning information, however, were aimed at influencing the contents of the media. The classic example in this regard was Napoleon's attempt to get the British government to suppress emigrant newspapers which were published in London during the brief interval of peace from 1802 to 1803. The British refused to co-operate. On the other hand, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union entered into a general agreement in 1924 in which both parties took it upon themselves to try to prevent conscious attempts to "embitter the British empire's or the Soviet Union's relations with their neighbours or with any other country". In 1934 Hitler's Germany entered into a press agreement with Poland and in 1936 a corresponding agreement with Austria, in which the parties took it upon themselves "to prevent publication of mutual assaults in the press". It does not appear that these agreements restrained Hitler in any way.

International agreements on measures against the distribution of pornographic printed matter have existed since as early as 1910. During the period between the First and Second World Wars, the League of Nations took the initiative in arranging three conferences for press experts in the years 1927, 1932 and 1933. Their purpose was to promote news distribution which could reduce the risk of international misunderstandings. The assembly of the League of Nations adopted a resolution which mentioned the difficult problem of the distribution of misleading information, which could threaten to destroy peace or good relations between nations. However, no agreement was reached as to how this problem should be solved. International correspondents at the League of Nations answered via a questionnaire that the solution lay in liberating the press throughout the world. On the other hand, the Fascist journalist syndicate in Italy claimed that misleading news could only be prevented by means of government monopoly or censorship. These two statements struck a note which would come to characterize much of the debate about international regulations on the flow of information for decades to come.

The most important agreement on information issues to be drawn up on an international level in the period between the two world wars was the International Convention concerning the Use of Broadcasting in the Course of Peace. This convention, which was signed in Geneva in 1936 and became effective on 2 April 1938, was a result of the talks which had taken place in and around the League of Nations during a period of ten years on means for preventing propaganda which could harm

the relations between nations. The Norwegian Arnold Raestad, who was the president of the Geneva conference, pointed out in his opening address that broadcasts cannot be stopped at the borders and that they can have effects which are not easily forseen. Mr. Raestad believed that an agreement in which Governments took it upon themselves to prevent broadcasts which may threaten peace could be compared to an agreement to renounce weapons which can have particularly destructive effects (UN Document E/CW.4/Sub.1/64).

The convention of 1936 has been described as a treaty of non-aggression within broadcasting. The parties to the agreement committed themselves to prohibit and if necessary stop broadcasts which might incite actions which could threaten the domestic security or order in one of the other countries. The parties took it upon themselves to monitor broadcasting for the purpose of preventing broadcasts which incite war, or which contain misleading statements which are apt to impair relations between nations. The broadcasting non-aggression treaty also contains provisions concerning the correction of incorrect information and negotiations in case of disagreement in interpretation of the convention. In the troubled years after the convention became effective it was for the most part forgotten. But it is still in effect.

The broadcasting non-aggression treaty also contains provisions of a positive nature, regarding the exchange of material which may serve to increase knowledge about other people's cultures and ways of life. Since 1936, a great number of bilateral and multilateral agreements have been established regarding cultural exchange and measures to promote mutual understanding.

At the close of the Second World War, the Western allies took the initiative for agreements which directly endorsed the freedom of the press. In a statement from the meeting between the three major powers in Berlin in 1945, the victorious powers expressed their confidence that the allied press would enjoy complete freedom to tell the world about developments in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. This line of thinking was followed up in the signing of the peace treaties with these countries and with Italy in Paris on 10 February 1947. The treaties established that the defeated countries should adopt measures to safeguard basic human rights for all, including the freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the freedom of publication. Several bilateral agreements followed the same pattern. For instance, the friendship agreement between the

United States and Italy, which was especially detailed on this point, stated that the two countries mutually guaranteed the rights of each other's citizens to participate in such activities as writing, reporting and gathering of news for the purpose of publication and to transmit material abroad in order to make it public by means of the press, broadcasting, film or other media.

THE UN SUB-COMMISSION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

It was the United States which took the initiative in making freedom of information and freedom of the press an issue in the UN during the first decade of its existence. Behind this initiative were American press associations and editors who wanted free access to gather, transmit and sell information throughout the world. In 1944 the American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted a resolution advocating international agreements on direct communication between all the nations of the world. These agreements were to remove legal barriers to the exploitation of new communication technology, do away with restrictions on the flow of news and ensure all press correspondents equal access to the channels of communication (Binder, 1952). Five months later the American Congress passed a unanimous resolution which proposed that the right to unrestricted news distribution without discrimination ought to be guaranteed by international agreements.

On 16 February 1946, the head of the American delegation to the UN, Mr. Edw. R. Stettinius Jr., submitted a proposal to Secretary General Trygve Lie that the UN Commission on Human Rights consider the question of freedom of information for the purpose of preparing a draft convention or other suitable recommendations. Just prior to this initiative, the delegation from the Philippines had presented to the General Assembly a proposal for a resolution regarding the convening of an international conference on press issues. In the late autumn of the same year, this resolution was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in a somewhat revised form.

This widely-known UN resolution, No. 59 (I), states that freedom of information is a fundamental human right which is the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the UN is consecrated. The resolution called for a conference on freedom of information for all the member states of the UN. The delegations were to include persons actually engaged or experienced in the media. The

purpose of the conference would be to formulate its views concerning the rights, obligations and practices which should be included in the concept of the freedom of information.

The following year the General Assembly adopted two other resolutions which were also placed on the agenda at the Conference on Freedom of Information. One of them concerned measures against propaganda and incitement to war. This resolution condemned all forms of propaganda which could lead to international aggression and requested Governments to adopt measures to promote peace-building information activities. The other resolution dealt with false or distorted reports. It called upon Governments to combat false information which could prove injurious to the peaceful relations between nations. The tension between the rhetoric of freedom in Resolution 59 (I) and the views on responsibilities in the two resolutions just described is highly indicative of the conflicts the debate on freedom of information would provoke.

As expected, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) entrusted the Commission on Human Rights with the preparations for the Conference on Freedom of Information ; the Commission was asked to delegate the practical preparations to a Sub-Commission on the Freedom of Information and of the Press. The sub-commission was to be composed of experts appointed on the basis of recommendations by members of the Commission on Human Rights. The selection was greatly influenced by a list circulated by the American delegation to the Economic and Social Council. This list contained names from Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, the Netherlands, Panama, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union and Uruguay. The names on the American list were chosen except for the Egyptian candidate, who was dropped in favour of the Norwegian Chr. A.R. Christansen.

The twelve-member sub-commission was to prepare the Conference on Freedom of Information, but that meant that they themselves had to discuss and propose standpoints on the difficult topics the conference was to deal with. Their discussions became quite comprehensive. Under the key concept "freedom of information and of the press" the sub-commission and other UN bodies during the next five years would study the international flow of news and the obstacles facing it, existing international agreements on freedom of information and

national legislation in this area. The debate would touch on ethical codes for the press, the development of national news agencies in developing countries, the working conditions of journalists, a court of honour for journalists, government information services, measures against violent or racially discriminating or Nazi propaganda, and the establishment of an international press institute, to mention some of the topics which were carried over from one meeting to another.

Two major topics were soon distinguished from the rest. The first, which would demand far and above the most time and effort, was the attempt to formulate binding international agreements on conditions for freedom of information and of the press throughout the world. The second was the formulation of a set of ethical guidelines for journalists.

The sub-commission was convened for its first meeting on 19 May 1947. Its first task was to draw up a provisional draft agenda for the conference. At this stage what the official report called a fundamental divergence of views among the members became apparent.

Most of the twelve members were media experts or experienced representatives of the press. The representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and France put forward a pragmatically oriented proposal for the agenda. They accepted the basic premise that the conference was to enter into a general discussion of the principles for freedom of information, and also advised that it should discuss the question of censorship as well as measures for promoting responsible practices by the press. But in addition they proposed that the conference ought to consider practical measures for increasing the freedom of movement of representatives of the press, for ensuring foreigners the same access to sources of information as nationals, for reducing telecommunications rates, for facilitating the international distribution of printed matter, for alleviating paper shortages, for improving educational opportunities for correspondents, and so on.

Mr. Lomakin, the Soviet representative, felt that this was beyond their mandate. He was willing to grant that all of these questions were undoubtedly important to journalists and to the press itself, but he did not feel that they were the significant key issues the future activity of the world press depended on.

He argued that the agenda first and foremost ought to have a clear political purpose, in other words that it ought to clearly define the reason that all these concerns were necessary, and that it ought to point out the responsibilities of the world press, even if that were done only in general terms. Mr. Limakin reprimanded the Western press, which he said had spread distrust between the allies after the war. He said that the time had arrived to call to order these machine-gunners of the press, who wanted to become heroes after the exchange of fire was over.

Mr. Lomakin believed that the purpose of the conference ought to be to establish the responsibilities of the world press. He proposed the following definition of the tasks of the press : "to struggle for international peace and security ; to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of independence, equal rights, and self-determination of peoples ; to organize the struggle for democratic principles, for the unmasking of the remnants of fascism and for the extirpation of fascist ideology in all its forms ; to co-operate in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and to encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of race, sex, language, or religion ; along with the development of freedom of information, to organize an effective campaign against organs of the Press and information which are inciting the peoples to war and aggression, and for a decisive and unremitting unmasking of warmongers".

The Norwegian participant replied that this was nothing more than what he tried to do in his own newspaper every single day. (Mr. Christensen was the editor of Verdens Gang, one of Norway's leading newsstand newspapers). He pointed out that striving for international understanding is commendable, but he maintained that it was even more important to pursue the truth, and there are instances in which these two considerations are at odds. The newspapers which wrote about Hitler's rearmament campaign did not promote good relations with Hitler's Germany, but they told the truth, and it was good that they had done so. This point of view was obviously widely shared among members of the twelve-member sub-commission. None of the members expressed agreement with the Soviet definition of the tasks of the world press. However, the other members did accept the legitimacy of placing the question of the responsibilities of organs of information on the agenda.

The Philippines representative, Mr. Lopez observed that it was not enough for journalists to demand the freedom to write about a fire. They ought not to perceive it as incompatible with their work to assist in putting out the fire, or at the least to keep out of the way of the firemen. He proposed the following formulation of the objectives of the press :

"To tell the truth without prejudice and to spread knowledge without malicious intent ; to facilitate the solution of the economic, social and humanitarian problems of the world as a whole through the free interchange of information bearing on such problems ; to help promote respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of race, sex, language, or religion ; to help maintain international peace and security through understanding and co-operation between peoples".

This formulation was accepted and incorporated in the sub-committee's provisional draft agenda for the conference.

During the dabate on the agenda, the Soviet representative claimed the sovereign right of states to control the flow of information as they saw fit. He opposed discussion of censorship by the Conference, nor did he want the question of non-discriminatory rates for foreign news agencies on the agenda. The concept "accredited correspondent" caused considerable difficulties for the same reason. The representative of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands maintained that all that was needed was that an employer had chosen his correspondent as competent for and suited to his work. Mr. Lomakin claimed that it was the sovereign prerogative of the Government in a country to establish the rights and obligations of foreign correspondents.

The Soviet representative was supported by the Czechoslovak member of the sub-commission on some issues, and other members of the sub-commission made concessions in order to reach agreement. The final provisional draft agenda was a compromise. Nonetheless, the Soviet representative voted against it. The proposal included the following main points : the principles of freedom of information, the responsibilities of the press, measures to facilitate the gathering of news, measures to promote the international transmission of information, measures to implement the right of all persons to objective and comprehensive information, and the establishment of a permanent arrangement to promote the free flow of information.

The sub-commission began to discuss the rights, obligations and practices which should be included in the concept of freedom of information at their first meeting. This discussion was continued at the sub-commission's second meeting, which began on 19 January 1948. At this meeting the fundamental differences of opinion in the sub-committee became evident.

On the one side was the representative from the Soviet Union. On the other side were the Western representatives. But there was also an obvious difference between the point of view of the American spokesman and the attitudes of the representatives from Norway, France, Czechoslovakia and a few other countries, who emphasized the danger of abuse of the freedom of expression through distortion of reality and monopolistic tendencies.

The Soviet representative once more stressed what the media were to be used for, what their purpose was. He rejected the principle of complete freedom as an empty phrase. Al Capone had wanted freedom to rob and kill without restraint, and the American authorities had rightfully imprisoned him at Alcatraz. In the same manner, organs of information which incited war ought to be stopped.

According to Mr. Lomakin, true freedom of information exists only where the common people and their organizations have material control of modern means of information -with the exception of people who spread propaganda for war and Fascism. In Mr. Lomakin's opinion, this described the situation in the Soviet Union. He maintained that it was not impossible to combat anti-democratic use of the means of opinion in other democratic countries as well. On the contrary, it was precisely in these countries that it was essential to adopt laws which denied Fascists and warmongers access to the media, which prevented bribery of journalists and ensured the general public concrete means of expression.

The American representative on the twelve-member sub-commission, Mr. Chafee, claimed taht freedom has an educative capacity. In accordance with American legal tradition he rejected use of coercion as long as it is possible to expose error and falsification by means of discussion and education. Encroachment on the freedom of expression is only justified in extreme situations. Mr. Christensen observed that the flow of information, like a river, has a great capacity for purifying itself if it is allowed to run freely. But these

representatives nevertheless agreed that freedom also implies responsibility. Mr. Chafee believed that there should not only be freedom from something, but also freedom for something ; it ought to be a means for the press to render a just service of communication in a free society. Mr. Christensen maintained that truth is threatened by abuse and distorsion just as much as by government censorship.

The Chinese representative Mr. Chang said that the freedom to inform ought not to be the freedom to disinform. The representative of the Netherlands Mr. van Heuven Goedhart pointed out that any definition of freedom of information must necessarily be a limitation of this freedom. He suggested a limitation to the effect that the freedom of information must not be used in a way which obstructs realisation of the ideals in the UN Charter. The French representative Mr. André Geraud pointed out two paradoxes ; on the one hand it was desirable to have private capital invested in newspapers, but it was not desirable to have owners avail themselves of the opportunity to maximize profit. On the other hand, it was desirable for the government to prevent abuse, but at the same time the press ought to be free to criticize the government. The tension between government and press would have to result in a compromise. The Czechoslovakian representative Mr. Lev Sychrava declared that freedom was only worth defending as long as it was not used in a way that threatened the moral and material foundations of society. A shared standpoint among all of these representatives was the fact that they placed greater emphasis on the development of journalists' own professional norms than on government regulations of the use of the means of information.

Despite their differences of opinion, the members of the sub-commission worked out a provisional statement on the concept of freedom of information. In this statement freedom of information was established as a universal human right. The statement listed considerations which could justify limitations on the freedom of expression, from vital national interests to protection against defamation. It established the moral obligation to tell the truth and to combat Nazism. In order to prevent abuse of the organs of information, the declaration recommended consideration of such measures as for instance the establishment of supervisory boards, clarification of editorial responsibility, trial projects with co-operative forms of ownership, and the education of journalists. Where there was a danger of government monopoly, the government ought to deny itself

effective control over all the means of information, so that it would not suppress their critical function. Where there was a danger of private monopolies, remedies would have to be sought in arrangements such as boards of appeal, disclosure of finances, measures against pressure by advertisers, and intervention against the establishment of trusts.

The mandate for the sub-commission also required that it formulate a draft for the articles on freedom of information and of the press for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and for what would become the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The sub-commission performed the first of these tasks. It drew up what later became Article 19 in the Declaration of Human Rights : "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression ; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". The French representative Mr. Geraud voted against this formulation, because it did not mention anything about the responsibilities which are associated with the freedom of information.

Nevertheless, the greatest difficulties arose in relation to the text for the Convenant on Civil and Political Rights. The sub-commission finally proposed an article containing four points, establishing the freedom of information, prohibiting advance censorship, demanding the removal of political, economic and technical obstacles to the free flow of information, and listing seven exhaustive considerations which could justify limitations on the right to freedom of expression. The representatives of both the United Kingdom and the United States expressed reservations regarding certain points in the text. The Czechoslovak and the Soviet representatives voted against it. As this text was the subject of comprehensive debate at the UN Conference on Freedom of Information and of the Press, it will be natural to return to it in that connection.

Through their work the twelve-member sub-commission had laid the premises for the debate which was to follow. When the UN Economic and Social Council considered the sub-commission's first report, they determined that the Conference should be convened in Geneva on 23 March 1948. The Soviet delegation presented a new proposal for the agenda for the Conference, but it was rejected. Even so, there were several speakers who expressed dissatisfaction that the

sub-commission had not placed greater emphasis on the responsibilities of organs of information.

The Norwegian, French and Chilean delegations put forward a proposal for an addition to the agenda for the Conference. It stated that one of the responsibilities of the press is to combat Fascist ideology and other forces which incite to war by removing Fascists and warmongers from organs of information. The purpose of this proposal, according to the Norwegian spokesman Mr. Finn Moe, was to include certain points that had been proposed by the Soviets. The Soviet delegate Mr. Morozov first said that he was willing to vote for the change, but he refrained from voting after the text was modified during the course of the debate so that it stated that the press was to combat any ideology which threatened freedom and human rights. During the committee deliberations the Norwegian delegation also proposed that the sub-commission ought to emphasize the responsibilities of the media when it considered the concept of freedom of information at its next meeting. As the Indian delegation presented a proposal to the same effect, the Norwegian proposal was withdrawn. The Indian proposal was adopted.

The Indian representative also introduced a new element during the debate in the Economic and Social Council. He pointed out that certain countries, such as India, might need to adopt protectionist measures against powerful foreign news agencies until it became possible to develop national agencies which were able to compete. The Council passed a statement which acknowledged that extraordinary supportive measures would be justified in such instances. This theme was to reappear with great force a quarter of a century later.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The international community has never been closer to reaching agreement on the fundamental conditions for the transmission of words and pictures within and between nations than at the UN Conference on Freedom of Information held at Geneva from 23 March to 21 April 1948. Against the background of the differences which had become apparent during the deliberations in the sub-commission, there were many who doubted that the Conference would be able to produce useful results. Despite these doubts, the Conference reached decisions on detailed proposals for three international conventions, it revised

two articles to be included in the Declaration of Human Rights and in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and it adopted no less than 43 resolutions. Not all of the decisions were unanimous. The six Eastern European countries voted against all the conventions, and the United States abstained from voting on one of them. But neither before nor since has the UN system managed to muster such wide support on such a detailed code for the principles of the freedom of information and the conditions for the international transmission of news.

The Conference on Freedom of Information was among the largest the UN had arranged until then. But the number of members in the UN was still small at that time. A total of 54 countries were officially represented. In addition, observers from three countries which had not yet become members of the UN and from eight international organizations were in attendance. The debate followed the same lines as in the sub-commission, but the tone was sharper.

The Soviet delegation once more placed the tasks of organs of information in the foreground. Just as it had been the responsibility of the media to combat Fascism, they now ought to take up the fight against warmongers. The Western representatives were willing to grant that it was one of the obligations of the press to counter war and aggression, but they maintained that the media could only do so if granted complete freedom.

The Soviet spokesmen replied that in countries such as France, the United Kingdom and the United States there was no true freedom of information, as the press only served the interests of a small minority. On the other hand, true freedom of information existed where all paper mills, printing presses and the like had become possessions of the government and therefore accessible to everyone. The Western representatives on their part claimed that there were far more independent newspapers than cartels in Western Europe and North America and that government monopoly was much more dangerous than these cartels, because it was all-encompassing. Despite these exchanges, the leader of the Norwegian delegation maintained after the Conference that the debate had been to the point for the most part and that there was little evidence of bitterness.

It may be useful to take a closer look at the differences of opinion relating to the most important decisions reached by the Conference. The draft

conventions are of central importance. They were not simply the expressions of political opinions. They were proposals for agreements the member states were to ratify, whereby they would become international law. They also represent the most far-reaching attempt ever made to create an international code regarding the freedom of information.

The draft Convention on Freedom of Information was put forward by the British delegation. This draft convention deals primarily with the right to unrestricted distribution of information within each individual country, but it also contains provisions regarding transmission of information across national boundaries. We may thus conclude that the draft provides a framework for freedom of information on a global scale.

The main provision is established in the first section of the first article : "Each Contracting State shall secure to all its own nationals and to the nationals of every other Contracting State lawfully within its territory freedom to impart and receive information and opinions, orally, by written or printed matter, in the form of art, or by legally operated visual or auditory devices without governmental interference". (United Nations, 1948). The four successive sections of the article prohibit discriminatory regulations concerning access to the use of the media, provide for freedom to transmit information across national frontiers, secure nationals from other contracting states the same access to sources of information as the nationals of the contracting state itself enjoy, and require the contracting states to effectively promote the interchange of press representatives between their countries.

Article 3 deals with the theme of responsibility. The contracting states are enjoined to encourage the establishment of non-governmental organizations of journalists in order to promote high standards of professional conduct. The following journalistic rules of conduct receive special attention : to report facts without prejudice, to facilitate the solution of the economic, social and humanitarian problems of the world, to help promote respect for human rights, to help maintain international peace and to counteract false or distorted reports which promote hatred or prejudice.

It was Article 2 which caused the most problems. It outlines exceptions from the rule of freedom of information. There are two possible ways of approaching

this task. One of them is to make a general formulation of the fundamental principles which may justify certain exceptions. The risk of such a formulation is that it may become so vague that it is easily abused. The other way is to list as precisely and exhaustively as possible the instances in which exceptions from the rule of freedom of information can be made. The danger involved in this solution is that it may appear as though the exceptions are predominant to the rule.

In accordance with the method used by the sub-commission when working on their contribution to the text for the Declaration of Human Rights, the Conference chose the latter approach. As limitations on the freedom of expression have become such a central theme in the international debate, it may be useful to quote the first section of Article 2 in its entirety.

Article 2, section 1 reads as follows :

"The freedom referred to in paragraphs (a), (c) and (d) of article 1 carry with them duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to necessary penalties, liabilities and restrictions clearly defined by law, but only with regard to :

(a) Matters which must remain secret in the interest of national safety ;

(b) Expressions which incite persons to alter by violence the system of government or which promote disorder ;

(c) Expressions which incite persons to commit criminal acts ;

(d) Expressions which are obscene or which are dangerous for youth and expressed in publications intended for them ;

(e) Expressions which are injurious to the fair conduct of legal proceedings;

(f) Expressions which infringe literary or artistic rights ;

(g) Expressions about other persons, natural or legal, which defame their reputations or are otherwise injurious to them without benefiting the public ;

(h) Legal obligations resulting from professional, contractual or other legal relationships including disclosure of information received in confidence in a professional or official capacity ;

(i) The prevention of fraud ;

(j) The systematic diffusion of deliberately false or distorted reports which undermine friendly relations between peoples or States".

In Articles 4, 5 and 6 the Convention contains certain special provisions regarding among other things the rights of contracting states to prevent

news cartels, to reserve for their own nationals the right to edit newspapers, and to practice their own rules regarding the right to entry and residence. Article 8 establishes the right of contracting states to derogate from their obligations under the Convention in time of war or other public emergency, but only to the extent strictly limited by the exigencies of the situation.

The Draft Convention of Freedom of Information was adopted at the Geneva Conference by a vote of 31 to 6, with 2 abstentions. The Soviet Union and its allies voted against the Convention because they considered that it paved the way for unlimited distribution of information without regard for its content. The abstaining countries were the United States and Australia. The American Government held that the list of exceptions in Article 2 allowed too much possibility to limit the freedom of information. But a solid majority of the member countries of the UN supported the text, and the American delegation recommended that the United States strive for modifications during deliberations in the UN Economic and Social Council which would make it possible for them to vote for the Convention in the next round.

It was the United States which put forward the Draft Convention on the Gathering and International Transmission of News. This is an outline for a moderate practical agreement on arrangements which can secure the working conditions of international correspondents. Whereas the Convention on Freedom of Information primarily establishes principles of freedom which are to apply within each country, this is a text regarding news transmission across national boundaries.

In order to encourage the freest possible movements of foreign correspondents, the Convention enjoins the contracting states to carry out a prompt and non-discriminatory processing of matters having to do with the residence and work of foreign correspondents. Foreign correspondents are to have the same access to news sources as national news correspondents. They are not to be expelled for having lawfully exercised their right to transmit information or opinions. Correspondents are to be guaranteed access to facilities for the international transmission of news material on the same basis as other users. All foreign correspondents and news agencies are to have the same right to transmit news from one country to another. On the other hand, foreign correspondents, as all other persons, are subject to the laws of the country of

residence and the regulations introduced for the protection of national security.

Article 4 of the Convention enjoins the contracting states to permit passage of news material "without censorship, editing or delay", with the exception of regulations relating directly to the maintenance of national military security. If a contracting state established censorship for a certain period of time for military reasons, it is to establish in advance what categories of news are forbidden and as far as possible carry out censorship in the presence of the foreign correspondent. Article 4 lists four conditions which must be met if censorship in the presence of the person concerned is not possible :

(1) The censor is to return the material within a fixed time-limit.

(2) Censored material is to be returned, so that the correspondent or the agency may know what has been censored in their text.

(3) The charge for transmitting the material is to be based on the number of words composing a telegram after censorship.

(4) No telegraph charge is to be made for material delayed by censorship for more than six hours.

The American delegation felt that this convention was one of the most important results of the Conference on Freedom of Information. It was adopted by a vote of 28 to 6, with 2 abstentions. Again it was the Eastern European group which voted against. During the debate on the various articles the Eastern European countries had tried in vain to include a passage to the effect that information activity must serve to combat incitement to war and Fascism. The Geneva Conference had unanimously adopted a resolution to that effect. But a clear majority found it unnecessary to include a similar clause in the convention as well.

The Draft Convention Concerning the Institution of an International Right of Correction was drawn up following a French initiative. The original French proposal had as its object the establishment of an international machinery specifically intended to enforce a set of regulations on international correction. This proposal met with considerable resistance and was altered so that it was more in line with a simpler correction procedure proposed by the United States.

The object of this convention is to prevent the publication of false or distorted news from injuring the friendly relations between nations. The

opening statements observed that it did not seem possible or desirable at that time to establish an international procedure for verifying news and imposing penalties for distorted reports. What was necessary above all was to sharpen the sense of responsibility in the media and to promote wide circulation of news. It also stated that an international right to correction can be an effective means to this end.

The Convention establishes a procedure for correction which is described in three articles. When news reports likely to injure the relations between one of the contracting states and other states are transmitted from one country to another and the contracting state in question alleges that these reports are false or distorted, it may submit its version of the facts to the states in which such reports have been made public. Such a communiqué may be issued only with respect to news reports and must not include expressions of opinion. It should not contain a larger number of words than the news report objected to, and in no case more than double the number of words in the news report to be corrected. Governments receiving the communiqué, regardless of their opinions concerning the facts in question, are to make it available to the news enterprises operating in their countries. Within five days they are to facilitate the dissemination of the communiqué through customary channels in accordance with their procedures for releasing news concerning international affairs. If a Government fails to fulfil its obligation, the Government exercising the right of correction may likewise discharge its obligation with respect to any communiqués thereafter submitted to it by the defaulting state. It may also submit the communiqué to the Secretary-General of the UN, who is to give it appropriate publicity within five days.

The right to correction which the convention makes possible is, then, limited. It applies only to news reports, and not to expressions of opinion. A Government receiving a communiqué is not required to ensure that independent media actually publish the correction ; it is only required to grant them access to the communiqué.

The Draft Convention concerning the Institution of an International Right of Correction was adopted by a vote of 33 to 7. The American delegation considered the convention a well-founded attempt to mitigate the effects of distorted reporting, in full accordance with freedom of the press. The Eastern

European countries voted against the convention since they found that the set of regulations was unjust. In countries in which the government is responsible for the content of the media, the government itself would be required to ensure that corrections by other Governments were made public. On the other hand, in countries in which the media are privately owned, no one would be required to publish the corrections, they maintained.

In their report on the Conference on Freedom of Information, the American delegation expressed their confidence that the results of the conference were constructive, both in the positive sense that the principle of freedom had been expanded in theory as well as in practice and in the negative sense that attacks on freedom had been rejected. The United States had been able to vote in favour of a total of 45 of the 48 texts the Conference adopted. In two instances they had abstained from voting ; only in one instance had the country voted against a decision. This was in the case of the draft of the article regarding freedom of expression in the Convenant on Human Rights, in which the United States was strongly opposed to one of the limitations, which had been proposed by India. (This sentence is identical with Article 2, paragraph (j) of the Convention on Freedom of Information. See above). The American delegation concluded in a unanimous statement that it was important to continue the international co-operation which had been initiated at the UN Conference on Freedom of Information.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed a special committee with representatives from the press, broadcasting and government authorities to examine the results of the Conference and present proposals for Norwegian follow-up measures, with particular reference to the three Conventions. The committee considered the formulation of the rules of exception in Article 2 of the Convention on Freedom of Information in depth. They concluded that a general exception clause was unsatisfactory, and that the convention ought to contain a list of the conditions which may justify exception from the right to freedom of expression. They felt that the list which was to be found in the draft convention was acceptable. To be sure, the committee would have preferred a more precise formulation of certain phrases, such as the expression "which promote disorder" in paragraph (b). However, they were not willing to oppose the decision in paragraph (j) concerning the systematic diffusion of deliberately false or distorted reports which the American delegation

had such great objections to.

The Norwegian committee presented a realistic evaluation in advising against attempts to formulate new normative texts on the basis of the resolutions from the Geneva Conference. They recommended instead that efforts should be concentrated on consideration of the three Draft Conventions the Conference had adopted. "This Conference was the first of its kind, and we ought to be quite satisfied if the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly are able to secure final acceptance of these three Conventions", the committee reported to the Ministry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed.

THE ENDEAVOURS COME TO NOTHING

The final act of the UN Conference on Freedom of Information, containing the 48 texts which had been adopted, was referred to the UN Economic and Social Council. In their last resolution the Conference expressed their hope that the responsible UN organs would take a stand on the three Draft Conventions that same year, so that the contracting states could sign them at once and accede to the provisions of the Conventions. That was not the course the matter was to take. Instead it would start on a meandering journey which would last for a quarter of a century. It is true that the Convention Concerning the Institution of an International Right of Correction did become effective in the course of the journey. But 30 years later there were still only 11 countries which had become parties to it. The other two Conventions were never signed. The world forgot the UN Conference of 1948 and the results it had achieved.

At the outset of this meandering journey, Mr. Charles Malik from Lebanon suggested the following set of definitions :

- Brevity means expressing few thoughts with many words.
- On the agenda means discussing whatever matter is not under consideration.
- Logical means a train of thought you agree with.
- A breach of a pact means a way of thinking you disagree with.
- Appointing a sub-committee means ensuring that a topic will be discussed at least twice by the same person.

During their seventh session, in the summer of 1948, the UN Economic

and Social Council only had time to consider the Draft Convention on the Gathering and International Transmission of News. Following an extended debate in the third committee, this Draft Convention was combined with the Draft Convention Concerning the Institution of an International Right of Correction, yielding the Convention on International Transmission of News and Right of Correction during the second part of the third ordinary General Assembly of the UN in the spring of 1949. Apart from minor editorial adjustments no significant changes were made in the texts from the UN Conference on Freedom of Information. The General Assembly adopted the combined Convention by a vote of 33 to 6, with 13 abstentions. The Eastern European countries voted against the convention, whereas the Nordic countries voted in favour of it, together with the United States and most other Western countries. But there was one formal difficulty : the General Assembly voted that the Convention should not be opened for accession until the General Assembly had reached a final decision on the Convention on Freedom of Information. However, deliberations on that convention were becoming more and more difficult.

At the fourth session of the UN General Assembly, in the autumn of 1949, a decision was made to postpone work on the Convention of Freedom of Information pending conclusion of the deliberations on the Declaration of Human Rights and the Convenant on Civil and Political Rights. These two texts also included certain provisions concerning the freedom of expression.

By the autumn of 1950, however, no further progress had been made in these deliberations. For that reason, the fifth session of the General Assembly adopted their own programme for concluding work on the Convention on Freedom of Information. A special committee was appointed to examine the draft once more. A conference for the purpose of signing the convention was to be held by February 1952 at the latest. The special committee had completed its work a year prior to this date.

In the autumn of 1951 the committee's report was presented in the UN Economic and Social Council, where it became evident that there were strong differences of opinion regarding the convention. ECOSOC advised against arranging a conference for accession. Early in 1952 their recommendation was presented to the sixth session of the General Assembly, which expressed regret at not having sufficient time to consider the matter. It was postponed until the

seventh session, which was convened in the late autumn of 1952.

During the seventh session France attained a majority for its proposal to approve the Convention Concerning the Institution of an International Right of Correction separately and to open it for accession at once. But whereas the United States and the Western European countries had actively supported this convention four years earlier, most of them voted against it now, together with the countries of Eastern Europe. The Nordic countries abstained from voting. Countries which previously had been in the forefront as supporters of the Convention on Freedom of Information would in the coming years apply their efforts to getting the matter shelved. The newly independent countries, which were gradually becoming members of the UN in greater numbers, joined forces with France, which hesitated to give up the attempt to get the entire set of agreements from the Geneva Conference adopted. However, new studies and new attempts at editing the agreements proved to be in vain. The matter was postponed year after year. For 20 years the Convention on Freedom of Information was on the agenda of the General Assembly. It was finally forgotten sometime in the 1970s.

International information issues were now approached from new angles. The change in attitude towards the draft conventions from 1948 was due to the fact that the circles which originally took the initiative for the UN Conference on Freedom of Information had backed out. They changed their minds as to what could be achieved by means of international agreements on questions of information. American media organizations were responsible for the United States freedom of information on the UN agenda in 1946. As a representative for the American press, Carroll Binder, pointed out in an article as early as 1952, an increasing number of American newspapermen had decided within a few years that this was a mistake (Binder, 1952). They now considered the Draft Convention on Freedom of Information to be a threat against the freedom of the press. No other issue -apart from the Korean war- aroused greater opposition within the United States against participation in the UN at that time. The leaders of the American mass media had decided that it was better for representatives of the government to keep out of the matter. They believed that if the UN was to deal with information issues, there was a greater danger of decisions justifying state censorship than there were chances of expanding freedom of information.

Disagreement in the UN on the Convention on Freedom of Information was not based on attempts to alter the text from the UN Conference. A number of new attempts at editing were carried out, to be sure, but the source of the fundamental disagreement was the same formulations which had been adopted in 1948.

Two points of disagreement arose which were more peripheral. One of them had to do with the question of whether the concept foreign correspondent should apply to correspondents who were nationals of the country in which they worked. A number of the developing countries, which were supported by the Soviet Union in this matter, claimed that this would imply an encroachment on national sovereignty and create a separate group of privileged citizens. A majority, on the other hand, were of the opinion that it was simply a question of granting foreign correspondents the same rights as journalists in the domestic media.

The second question dealt with what effects the conventions were to have on peoples who had not yet attained national independence. If these provisions were not to apply to them, the conclusion could be made that they were denied rights granted to other peoples. If the provisions were to apply to them, it could be said that the colonial powers had forced upon them a set of regulations which they themselves had not taken part in approving. The latter viewpoint enjoyed the most support. Even though these questions caused disagreement, they were nevertheless not the reason no progress was made.

During the debate the representative of the Soviet Union declared that the purpose of the press ought to be to promote international peace and security, whereas the Geneva conventions, on the contrary, ensured the freedom to lie and distort the truth. In line with this train of thought, the Polish representative set forward a proposal during the deliberations on the Convention on Freedom of Information to the effect that "news material" in the sense of the convention should only include material which was not apt to threaten peace or injure the good relations between nations by the use of distorted renderings.

The tone used by Western nations was increasingly critical. As early as the first meeting in the UN Economic and Social Council after the UN Conference, the American representative had voiced his concern about the limitations on freedom of information in the convention, in which it appeared as if

"the tail of limitations was wagging the dog of freedom". Two years later the American representative stated in the same forum that this convention, and in particular Article 2, was unsatisfactory and more likely to limit than to expand the freedom of information. Attempts to adopt such a text would be doomed to failure. Freedom of the press cannot be limited without being lost, the American representative maintained. The limitations in Article 2 were of such a nature that they could not be implemented in the United States because they were unconstitutional. No journalist would accept them, he declared.

Efforts were made in the special committee to formulate general guidelines which could replace the exhaustive list in Article 2, which had caused such great difficulties. Two of the proposals are of particular interest, as they illustrate so well the confrontation which caused the matter to miscarry.

The Soviet representative proposed a formulation stating that everyone should be guaranteed freedom of expression, provided that this freedom was not used for propaganda inciting to war, for creating hostility between peoples, for racial discrimination or for spreading false rumours. The American representative put forward a text stating that the only limitations on the freedom of expression which could be justified were those which were necessary in order to safeguard national security, prevent disorder, secure public safety, health or morals, protect the reputations of natural or legal persons, or ensure the fair conduct of legal proceedings. In these two proposals the two opposing views were clearly expressed, one of them concluding that the government ought to control the general orientation of the media, the other one maintaining that governments ought to interfere in the content of the media only in certain strictly defined situations.

Neither of these proposals was adopted. The special committee had no other choice than to fall back on the text from the Geneva Conference, which was recommended with only a few changes. The most important change was the removal of paragraph (j), the most controversial section.

When the report of the special committee was considered at the seventh session of the UN General Assembly, Mr. Rolf Edberg, the representative of Sweden, gave voice to the change in attitude which had taken place. As chairman of the Swedish Press Club and the Scandinavian Press Association, Mr. Edberg

said that Scandinavian journalists on the whole assumed that a convention of the type which was proposed would not serve to promote freedom of the press and could indeed embody a certain risk. The Swedish Government was of the same opinion. Nonetheless, Sweden was willing to co-operate in efforts to improve the text of the Convention on Freedom of Information.

The report to the Storting on Norway's participation in the fourteenth ordinary session of the UN General Assembly in 1959 may serve as a good illustration of the way in which the negative attitude towards the convention was strengthened in the course of the 1950s : "The statements containing the most reservations were delivered by the delegates from the five Nordic countries. Mr. Trygve Haugeland, representative to the Storting, confirmed that Norway would not be willing to give its support to the convention on the basis of the existing draft. There was no general agreement as to what the concept freedom of information involved. What some parties considered a free press was what others considered a restricted press and vice versa. Under such conditions it was difficult to see how the convention could serve any useful purpose.

These general misgivings had been further strengthened as a result of the content of the Draft Convention. The Norwegian delegation feared that the major effect of such a convention would be to give existing limitations on the freedom of information the blessing of an international agreement and to justify new encroachments. This fear was based primarily on the proposed Article 2, which appeared to pave the way for practically unlimited restrictions on the freedom of information. But other articles, too, could have such an effect. The Norwegian representative emphasized the fact that the attitude of the delegation was based on opinions voiced by organizations of the press among others. These statements concerned the very same convention that Norway, as well as most other Western countries, had been ready to adopt a decade earlier.

The UN Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information did not cease to exist immediately following the Geneva Conference in 1948. It too lived on for a number of years, but it now played a much more passive role. Most of the sub-commission's work at the beginning of the 1950s had to do with formulating a proposal for professional ethics, an international standard for commendable press practices. These were the same years that the Soviet Union boycotted the

UN as a protest against Nationalist China's membership.

The sub-commission's proposal was based on the principle point of view that the level of information can be improved by means of a voluntary campaign for responsibility within the profession itself. At their final meeting the members of the sub-commission proposed that the UN convene a world conference of press and information personnel to consider their proposal for an international standard of press ethics. This proposal was not adopted, but the material the sub-commission gathered still exists. Together with other aspects of the debate on the freedom of information during the first decade of the UN's existence, this material may provide useful insights when new attempts are made to co-operate on the conditions affecting the flow of information across national frontiers.

II. NEW CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE INFORMATION ORDER

In the early 1970s the international press turned its attention to a new arena for the international debate on information issues : Unesco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It was true that Unesco had worked on research, reports and international agreements dealing with the transmission of words and pictures ever since the first years after the Second World War, and the organization had aided member countries with education and the establishment of institutions in these areas. The Norwegian Tor Gjesdal had played an important part in this work. But only now did Unesco become the centre of dispute for international disagreement on these issues. It was also true that information issues were still on the agenda for the UN, and in 1978 the General Assembly established a committee which holds annual debates on the conditions affecting international information. But these debates are of a general nature. Since the unsuccessful endeavours following the Geneva Conference in 1948, the UN had entrusted the operative activities related to international information issues to the most relevant specialized agency. These activities were to place Unesco at the centre of a bitter conflict.

Once again the dispute concerned the establishment of limits on the freedom of information. In a number of cases Unesco tried to define the social responsibility of the mass media and of persons working in communications.

This was and remains an extremely difficult task, because opinions vary from those who claim that the media ought to be able to publish anything that is "newsworthy" to those who would deny the media the right to criticise the government. With one notable exception, which we shall return to, Unesco's endeavours remained within the guidelines for recommendations from the Geneva Conference of 1948 and the UN Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information. But the climate had become harsher. A recurring theme in the Western press was the idea that Unesco had become an instrument for dictators who wanted to suppress freedom of the press.

It is not surprising that members of the press and their readers were alarmed at the news that an international organization was in the process of curbing the freedom of the press. Since the mid-1970s organizations such as the World Press Freedom Committee, Freedom House, Inter-American Press Association and to some extent the International Press Institute had followed Unesco's activities with vigilance to find evidence that this was what the organization was doing. Most of the time they believed that they found such evidence. In the various editorial staffrooms the editors in charge and the writers of editorials saw no reason for doubting the reports of Unesco's attacks on the free press. The process became self-perpetuating. It became common practice to refer to "Unesco's urge for censorship" and "attempts by UN bureaucrats to curb the free press", to cite two representative statements from Dagbladet (a leading Norwegian newsstand newspaper) from 19 February 1981 -as if these phrases described established facts. One could easily quote other similar statements. Regardless of what Unesco was or was not, the international press created an image of Unesco as the enemy of a free press. This image was to have serious consequences.

The problem was that those who were familiar with Unesco's work did not recognise it in the image which was spread in this manner. On the contrary, they regularly experienced that the organization's decisions on questions of information were described in a way which evidenced poor professional standards : the descriptions were uninformed, misleading and biased. This was a shame for a number of reasons. It is indeed important to pay close attention to international information activities. It will always be necessary to struggle to maintain the freedom of the press. But in the long run such a struggle will defeat its own purpose if it is fought for the wrong reasons towards the wrong end.

This was the sort of thing that characterised the international press coverage of Unesco's work on normative information issues during much of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, although there have been signs of improvement recently, and although the organization's work on practical media assistance has received better treatment by the press.

The National News Council in the United States published a critical description of this type of reporting in a report of 6 March 1981 on the press coverage of Unesco's General Conference in Belgrade in the autumn of 1980. The NNC examined 448 news clippings and 206 editorials from the American press. In addition they made use of material which was made available by other researchers.

The NNC was not able to find a single example of reporting from Unesco's six week conference which dealt with the organization's fundamental efforts to eradicate illiteracy, protect historical cultural treasures, expand higher education, co-operate in the exploration of natural resources, and so on. (One of the news agency editors responded that it's not news if a plane lands without crashing). On the contrary, they found quantities of negative news articles and editorials on Unesco's work on information issues. The editorials were almost always strongly critical of Unesco, and the most space was dedicated to news articles which supported the attitudes expressed in the editorials. The report gives several concrete examples of how news was distorted by means of the process of selection and editing and the criteria which controlled this process.

The Nationsl News Council did not doubt that the American press representatives were sincere -or could be right- when they expressed uneasiness about Unesco's work. But the Council found that predispositions influenced the choice of news in a way which was incompatible with basic requirements for impartial news reporting. American readers had no possibility of evaluating the attitudes in the editorials on their own. Western newspaper leaders often tell journalists from the Third World about the beneficial effects of having a press free from governement control. But the coverage of Unesco's twenty-first General Conference was not an example of this. On the contrary, the researchers in the National News Council found that the reporting provided more evidence than would be desired to support claims that the Western press gives people a distorted and negative image of reality.

At the request of Unesco, the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania carried out a study of the American press coverage of the fourth extraordinary session of the Unesco General Conference in autumn of 1982. (Annenberg, 1983). The results of this study are in complete agreement with the results of that done by the N.N.C.

Unesco's fourth extraordinary General Conference was convened to consider the organization's 6-year Medium-Term Plan for the period 1984 to 1989. Only one in fifteen newspapers in the United States mentioned the conference, and most of the 116 newspapers which did so carried only one small item. Apart from the New York Times, which was the source of twelve stories with a combined circulation of 5 million, the newspapers relied almost entirely on the news service from UPI, AP and Reuters, and primarily on the first two of these.

In most of the news items the General Conference was referred to as the "communications conference", as if no other topics were on the agenda, and Unesco's six-year plan was called "the communications plan". Coverage was characterised by expectations of a tough battle between freedom and censorship. When the communication programme -officially known as "Communication in the Service of Man"- was adopted unanimously, to the satisfaction of the Western delegations, this was only mentioned in half of the newspapers (and with one-third of the circulation) which carried the conflict stories.

The so-called "communications plan" was the subject of comment in 54 editorials. Neither these editorials nor the news stories placed any emphasis on the other thirteen major programmes which occupied most of the time at the Unesco conference and accounted for 95 per cent of the final report. All of the editorials were negative except for one (in the Chicago Defender, a Black-oriented newspaper with a circulation of 31.000).

The researchers at the Annenberg School found a self-intensifying tendency in the system : the correspondents knew that what the desk expected was material about the media conflict, not about Unesco's other activities. They sent the kind of news they thought might get printed. The rejection of other angles was strengthened once more when editors chose what they wanted to use, and the concentration on the media conflict was further sharpened in the editorials. "The press constructed a picture of the meetings more from selected

speeches and prior information than from the actual resolutions and official actions of the conference. That construction showed a preoccupation with real and imagined threats to private control of the press to the virtual exclusion of other issues".

The researchers found a directly paranoid tone in many of the editorials. Press coverage did not leave room for any American points of view other than that of the press and its organizations -which was then presented as the point of view representing the national interest.

When the press writes about press issues, it has a double role. In the first place the media carry out their usual activities when they consider the information debate : they give coverage of an issue which is the subject of public interest. But at the same time they are a party to the matter : the debate deals with what media people rightly or wrongly consider the interests of the press vis-à-vis the government. And this is not simply a question of the right to exercise freedom of speech. The issue also concerns the substantial market interests of powerful news agencies and media organizations. It is natural that the media are especially vigilant concerning issues which affect their own activities. But it is also problematic. When the mass media have a vested interest, it is even more difficult than usual for them to live up to the demands for comprehensiveness and impartiality which the members of the profession themselves set as their goal.

But let us now take a closer look at the issues which have been in the centre of the press campaign against Unesco.

THE MASS MEDIA DECLARATION OF UNESCO

At the seventeenth session of the General Conference of Unesco in 1972, the Soviet Union and the Byelorussian SSR put forward a proposal that a draft declaration be drawn up establishing the fundamental principles on the role of the mass media in strengthening peace and international understanding and in combating war propaganda, racism and apartheid. The Secretariat showed little enthusiasm for this proposal. Unesco's work in the field of communication was at that time of a more practical and technical orientation. Deputy Director-General Fobes pointed out that the sector in question was already fully

engaged on a working programme which included projects such as satellites, professional ethics and news agency development. There was no great enthusiasm among the member countries, either, for tackling the problem of yet another normative document. In the commission the proposal was passed by a vote of 32 to 15 (among those opposing were the United States, Denmark, Norway and Sweden), with 13 abstentions (among them Finland). At the plenary meeting the vote was 68-16-6. However, the deliberations at the 17th session of the General Conference gave no warning of the storm this matter would cause for Unesco.

The first draft for the media declaration was drawn up by a Swedish expert on international law and press legislation, Hilding Eek. His draft was presented at a meeting of experts with participants from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Argentina, Senegal, Kenya, Lebanon, India, Poland and the Soviet Union. This meeting agreed on a text which contained certain modifications in relation to Hilding Eek's proposal. After the Secretariat had made a few minor changes in the text, the Director-General put forward the draft at the Eighteenth Session of the General Conference of Unesco in 1974. A certain scepticism regarding this draft prevailed in the Nordic Unesco circles, but a Nordic expert seminar in Finland in August that year recommended supporting it. However, various Member States had proposed eleven draft resolutions to amend the text. Nine of these proposed resolutions originated in socialist countries, the two others coming from Peru and India. It was evident that if the text was appreciably changed in the manner suggested by most of these proposals the issue would give rise to serious controversy. For that reason Belgium proposed that an intergovernmetal conference of experts be held to examine the text and present a new draft at the Nineteenth Session of the General Conference of Unesco. This proposal was adopted.

The meeting of experts took place in December 1975. It was at this meeting that things went wrong. That same autumn there had been an uproar in the UN when the General Assembly adopted the so-called "zionism resolution", equating zionism with racism. In Western circles it was feared that this matter would be raised at Unesco's meeting of experts as well, it being held so soon afterwards. Western countries waited as long as possible to announce their delegations, first in the hope that the necessary quorum would not be reached, then in an attempt to appear as though the meeting was not considered important. But the meeting was held, and the question of the "zionism resolution" did arise.

When the meeting began to discuss the preambular paragraphs of the declaration, the Arab countries demanded that a paragraph with the same wording as UN Resolution 3379 -the "zionism resolution"- be included. The Yugoslavian delegation tried to make the text more palatable to the Western countries by cloaking the reference to resolution 3379 almost imperceptibly in a reference which also listed other UN resolutions against racism. But the number was still there. The Western countries now assumed that the proposal would be forwarded to the editing group so that there would be time for further revision. However, Algeria moved that the matter should be decided by a final vote at once.

By a vote of 36 to 22, with 7 abstentions, the meeting voted to include a reference to the controversial UN resolution in the preambular part of the media declaration, as Yugoslavia had proposed. After this vote most of the Western delegations left the meeting of experts in protest. They boycotted the remainder of the meeting. This walk-out would have wide-ranging consequences for the further proceedings on the mass media declaration.

The field was now open for the most active of the delegations which remained. The diminished assembly approved most of the draft amendments which had been proposed by the socialist countries. Dispute would later arise regarding Article 12 : "States are responsible for the activities in the international sphere of all mass media under their jurisdiction". Although the formulation was ambiguous -there was room for doubt as to what the words "under their jurisdiction" meant, in particular- the Western press interpreted the article as a general injunction to Governments to interfere in the media's coverage of international issues. If the original proposal by the Director-General had been met with scepticism, a text had now been created which was bound to cause a storm in the West.

The final text was approved by a vote of 41 to 8, with 3 abstentions. At the opening of the meeting of experts, 85 delegations with the right to vote were in attendance. Of that number, 33 delegations either boycotted the meeting, or -in most instances- were absent during the vote. The draft for the media declaration was approved by a number of votes which was less than half the original number of participants. But the draft declaration was approved according to the correct formal procedure, and the Director-General was obliged to submit it to the Nineteenth Session of the General Conference.

This was the text which sparked the press campaign against Unesco's work on information issues during the following decade. The starting point was doubly unfortunate. As the background to the issue shows, the Secretariat had no responsibility for the text. It was created at the meeting of experts, and it materialised because the Western powers left the meeting and neglected to fight for their point of view. But these nuances soon disappeared. As Morgenbladet (a conservative Norwegian newspaper) wrote on 1 November 1976 : "Now it is the freedom of the press UNESCO intends to destroy".

It was also unfortunate for Unesco that the controversy was triggered by a conflict on such a sensitive subject as the question of zionism. As early as the previous year, Israel's friends had started a campaign against the organization because the General Conference had directed sharp criticism against the behaviour of the Israeli occupying authorities in the fields of culture and education, and because a majority had voted down Israel's application for admission to the European regional group, to which the country did not then belong. The latter decision was reversed at the Nineteenth Session of the General Conference in 1976. But in the meantime it caused damage through the media in what one is tempted to call a familiar way. Israel was "denied entrance to the organization", Vart Land (a Norwegian Christian newspaper) wrote on 10 November 1976. The matter was commonly presented as if Unesco had excluded Israel.

Although the organization gradually recovered from this controversy, it was soon succeeded by a press campaign against Unesco's activities in the field of information. The ground had been well prepared for a negative impression of Unesco.

Following the Nineteenth Session of the General Conference of Unesco, which for the first time met in Africa, "the spirit of Nairobi" was talked about for a long time. This meeting was successful in getting Israel accepted as a member of the European regional group, as mentioned above, and the tone of language in the criticism of Israel's dealings in educational and cultural affairs in the occupied areas was moderated. But it was the mass media declaration which was now the focal point of political interest. The meeting struggled with this matter until the very end. Both the United States and the EEC countries refused to negotiate on the basis of documents 19C/91, which contained the text from the meeting of experts the previous year. As a member of a special drafting

group, the author of this study was given the task of formulating a draft of an alternative text, which could provide the starting point for a discussion (19C/INF.21). However, the situation was too dead-locked for an attempt at negociations to succeed.

The Nairobi Conference reached two other decisions which would later prove significant. The Director-General was directed to appoint a special commission to study global information issues (the MacBride commission). And a proposal to strengthen Unesco's practical efforts for media development in the Third World was adopted. (Norway was a joint sponsor of this proposal).

Not until two days prior to the closing of the six-week conference did the drafting and negotiating group manage to agree on a compromise for the media declaration. It stated that the Director-General should initiate comprehensive consultations well in advance fo the Twentieth Session of the General Conference with a view to preparing a final draft for a declaration which could meet with the widest possible agreement. This proposal was adopted by concensus at the plenary of the General Conference.

However, following thorough consultations with experts and government representatives during the autumn of 1977 and the following winter, the Director-General of Unesco concluded that the Member States had imposed on him an almost impossible task. A new text had indeed been formulated, but in a report to the members of the Executive Board of Unesco in April 1978 the Director-General informed them that there were strongly differing opinions on the draft. These points of view were divided into five categories in his report. One group was willing to approve the new text. A second group was of the opinion that the text should be improved, but that it was a suitable starting point for discussions. Yet another group wanted an entirely different type of document, directed towards the idea of a new international information order. A fourth group felt that work on the media declaration ought to be postponed until the MacBride commission had submitted its report on global communication issues. And finally, there was a group which opposed a media declaration under any circumstances, because they feared that any government initiative in this area could result in encroachments on the freedom of the press.

The report concluded that the differences between the Member States

were irreconciliable and that it was difficult to entertain any illusion of the possibility of getting a declaration adopted with any sort of concensus at that time. The Director-General asked the Executive Board for advice.

This report caused a good deal of bewilderment among the members of Unesco's Executive Board. There was considerable support for the idea of referring the entire media declaration to the MacBride commission. Other members took a more sceptical view of this commission. Gradually, however, the idea that the Member States had taken upon themselves a moral and political obligation in Nairobi prevailed. Those in favour of a declaration had agreed to postpone the matter. In return, those who opposed the existing text had agreed that a final draft should be put forward in 1978. All members had emphasized the fact that this draft ought to be such that it "could meet with the largest possible measure of agreement".

The working group appointed by the Executive Board believed that it should still be possible to achieve agreement for such a draft, provided that the Member States were willing to seek common ground. The Executive Board concurred with this view. In a unanimous decision, the Director-General was asked to make another attempt on this basis. This exhortation was directed to an equal degree at the Member States.

A new proposal was then drawn up prior to the Twentieth Session of the General Conference. In the draft now circulated by the Director-General, the controversial aspects of the text from the meeting of experts in 1975 had been removed. The reference to the UN "zionism resolution" was gone. The article on the responsibility of states for the media's international activities had been removed. Considerable emphasis was placed on avoiding formulations which could be used to justify encroachments on the freedom of the press. This was evident in the title, for instance. In accordance with the original Soviet resolution proposal, most of the earlier drafts had used the expression "the Use of the Mass Media in . . .". Now the title referred to "the Contribution of the Mass Media in . . .". The ethical responsibility for the exercise of freedom of information and of the press was more clearly placed on the members of the profession. The demand for protection of journalists' professional status was strongly emphasized.

Nevertheless, there were several aspects of the draft which still aroused opposition in Western countries. There was a fear of abuse of Article XI, which spoke of the obligations of states to guarantee that the media they had legal jurisdiction over acted in accordance with the declaration. The socialist countries, too, had objections. Nonetheless, a situation which had not existed since the Nairobi conference had been created : a basis for discussion now prevailed.

At the Twentieth Session of the General Conference, in the autumn of 1978, the substantive negotiations on the media declaration took place behind closed doors. During the final round, the Director-General himself took charge of the work of formulating a text all parties could accept. New proposals were put forward by both the Western and the Eastern groups. The African group played an important part as mediators in the unofficial negotiations behind the scenes which went on for several weeks. A text was finally created which both the representatives of the Western countries and the spokesmen for the Third World could accept. The Eastern European countries acceded to the proposal. It was approved by acclamation.

No group was successful in getting everything it wanted included in the text, but neither did it contain anything which was directly unacceptable to any group wanting to uphold its international reputation. In April 1984, West Germany stated in a position paper that the media declaration should provide the basis for guidelines for Unesco's entire communications programme. This was quite different from the rumours that the draft would result in complete curbing of the freedom of information.

It is not readily evident that the media declaration established principles which were not already expressed in other international documents. The controversy surrounding the declaration was on the verge of destroying Unesco, and it was imperative for the organization that a way out of the difficulties the Member States had created be found. In addition to having achieved this, the declaration finds its significance in the fact that it expresses what member countries in the East and West and in the South could agree upon declaring regarding the international obligations of the mass media in 1978. As its name indicates, the declaration deals with "fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and inter-

national understanding, to the promotion of human rights and to countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war".

The preamble of the mass media declaration quotes from a number of international resolutions, declarations and conventions dealing with these issues. In addition to ideological phrases the text also includes concrete standpoints. The operative articles mention that it is important that the mass media promote the participation of the public, give expression to oppressed peoples, draw attention to the evils which afflict humanity, contribute to eliminating ignorance and misunderstanding, play a part in the education of young people, and so on. Equality between the sexes is not mentioned. But these articles are not depicted as conditions Governments are to set. They are expectations for the role the media can play in a world with "a free flow and a wider and better balanced dissemination of information".

Several of the formulations express faith in the value of pluralism. For instance, it is stated that the media's contribution to the objectives of the declaration will be "more effective to the extent that the information reflects the different aspects of the subject dealt with". And Article II declares : "Access by the public to information should be guaranteed by the diversity of the sources and means of information available to it, thus enabling each individual to check the accuracy of facts and to appraise events objectively. To this end, journalists have freedom to report and the fullest possible facilities of access to information".

Article X states that it is necessary that conditons be created throughout the world which make it possible for media and the persons engaged in the dissemination of information to achieve the objectives of the declaration. The media declaration, then, is characterised by the belief that the mass media have important contributions to make to promoting peace, understanding and human rights. It states that favourable conditions must be created so that they can make these contributions. But it does not make this a pretext for government intervention in the activities of the press.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS

Article VII of the mass media declaration states that professional organizations and other agents of the mass media ought to attach special importance to the principles of the declaration when drawing up and applying their codes of ethics. Two of the articles, II and IX, speak of the importance of protecting journalists in the exercise of their profession and of giving them the best possible working conditions both in their own country and abroad. "Unesco is well placed to make a valuable contribution in this respect", Article IX concludes. Thus two themes are introduced which have recurred in the press campaign against Unesco in recent years : ethical codes for the press and the protection of journalists.

The question of the effects of ethical codes for the mass media is problematic. Codes for journalistic conduct could easily lead to the belief that practising journalists have complete control over the content in newspapers and broadcasting. This would be an illusion. Journalists are paid employees who are to satisfy the demands of their employers, whether private or governmental. They are subject to pressure from market forces and authorities, from owners and accounting departments. The International Organization of Journalists has therefore proposed that owners and government authorities, too, ought formally to recognize a code of ethics of the press, so that journalists will be better protected. The International Federation of Journalists has expressed similar thoughts. This organization has also pointed out the difference between freedom of press and the freedom of journalists, and has advocated that editing staffs be granted increased influence in matters which are of significance for the editorial policy and the development of the medium in question. (Unesco, 1981).

Mass media codes of ethics now exist in more than fifty countries. Most often the code has been drawn up by the members of the profession themselves, in order to mitigate external criticism or to secure the members of the profession against pressure or backsliding. But in some instances codes have been established as a result of government initiative, perhaps with the ulterior motive of giving the authorities a means to control the use of the media. On the international level as well, recommended codes of ethics for the mass media have been worked out. These model codes have been drawn up in part by non-governmental international organizations and in part by inter-governmental organizations. (Jones, 1980).

The Department of Mass Communications at the University of Tampere, Finland has carried out a study of the references in international conventions, declarations and key resolutions which are of significance for journalistic and media activities. They identified a total of 44 texts which in one way or another address the practices of the media, most of them adopted by the UN or by Unesco. 25 of these texts explicitly emphasize the freedom of information. 31 of them speak of the responsibility of the media in contributing to international understanding, 27 make references to peace and security, and 18 of the texts mention the obligation to strive for truthfulness, objectivity and so on.

Most of the references to the media in international resolutions, then, deal with the responsibilities of the media, primarily on the international level. By way of comparison, the department mentions that only two of five professional codes of ethics for journalists touch on international concerns. (Unesco, 1981).

The first time the question of a code of ethics specifically for the media was raised at an international level was when two international journalist organizations in the mid-20s jointly issued an inquiry in which they asked the League of Nations and the International Labour Office (ILO) to raise the question of the position of journalists throughout the world in terms of their professional status and responsibilities in society. This inquiry resulted in a report from the ILO in 1928 on the working conditions of journalists. The ILO pointed out that journalists require special protection because opinions are a part of their job. It is possible to build a bridge or make a watch regardless of belief or conviction. The same does not apply to a newspaper article. The ILO report was one of the first instances to propose the establishment of exclusively professional courts to deal with professional conduct. The main purpose of the report was to give journalism an undisputed status and to protect the members of the profession from unreasonable demands made by their employers.

By far the most extensive attempt to develop an international code of ethics for the mass media was the efforts made within the UN in the years following the Second World War. Following prolonged power struggles, and after having collected points of view from professional organizations in numerous countries, the UN Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press agreed on a draft International Code of Ethics for Communication Professionals in 1952. The UN Economic and Social Council sent this draft to national and

international professional organizations and left further initiatives in the matter up to them. Nothing more came of it. But the UN draft from 1952 is an historical model which can hardly be ignored by those who might later set out to establish recommended international guidelines for a journalistic code of ethics.

The UN Draft International Code of Ethics for Information Personnel is intended to be a code of conduct for everyone engaged in information activities. The draft contains elements which may be found in almost all professional codes of this type. Information personnel must do their best to ensure that information is factually accurate. "No fact should be wilfully distorted and no essential fact should be deliberately suppressed". Harmfully inaccurate information should be immediately corrected. Unfounded accusations are condemned, as is plagiarism. The right to protect sources is established. Two passages are worthy of further attention. The UN code is characterised by the point of view that the media perform a service for society : "A high standard of professional conduct requires devotion to the public interest. The seeking of personal advantage and the promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare, for whatever reason, is not compatible with such professional conduct". Information which may harm the reputation of individuals should not be published, "unless it serves the public interest, as distinguished from public curiosity". It is also worth mentioning that those who describe events in another country have a duty to become well acquainted with that country, so that they know what they are reporting.

The preamble to the UN draft contains a firm profession of freedom of information and of the press. It states that this freedom will be better safeguarded if media personnel show responsibility and feel obliged to seek the truth. The draft closes by establishing that the responsibility for observing professional ethics lies with those who are engaged in the profession and not with governments. For that reason, nothing in the international code of ethics is to be interpreted in such a manner that it gives a Government any reason at all to intervene in order to force members of the profession to conduct themselves according to the moral code. The draft, then, unequivocally advocates voluntary disciplinary instances within the ranks of the profession.

The resolutions which have been adopted by non-governmental organizations regarding international codes of ethics contain many of the same elements.

These organizations endorse the view that the members of the profession themselves ought to draw up codes of ethics for the profession. There are two dominant international organizations of journalists. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), which is based in Western countries, adopted a declaration of the principles for journalistic conduct in 1954. This declaration establishes respect for the truth as the principle guideline for journalistic conduct. The International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), which has its roots in Eastern Europe, prepared a document on professional ethics for the collective consultations on codes of ethics arranged by Unesco in 1973. For the most part, this document follows the same pattern, but it also emphasizes the responsibilities journalists ought to strive to fulfill and endorses the view that journalism is an activity in the service of the public interest.

The Declaration of Rights and Obligations of Journalists, approved at a meeting of representatives of the journalists' unions of the countries of the European Community in Munich in November, 1971, appears to have been even more carefully prepared. The Swiss and Austrian journalists' unions and the IOJ also took part in drawing up this declaration. It declares that all journalistic rights and duties originate from the fundamental right of the public to be informed. "The journalists' responsibility towards the public excels any other responsibility, particularly towards employers and public authorities".

An interesting example of a regional code of ethics is the broadcasting code which was drawn up at the fourth Asian broadcasting conference in Kuala Lumpur in 1962. Based on a recognition of the tremendous power of radio and television for commendable or less commendable ends, this code emphasizes the need for objective news reporting, unbiased coverage of controversial issues, and the promotion of education, culture and understanding between peoples.

In 1974, the eighteenth session of the General Conference of Unesco voted to contribute to improving professional standards in the mass media by means of recommended guidelines for national codes of ethics. These codes were to "promote the sense of responsibility which should accompany the full exercise of freedom of information". The most important result of this decision was a comparative international study of existing codes of ethics, published in 1980. (Jones, 1980).

The MacBride commission also considered the question of norms of professional conduct in its report on global communication problems. The commission pointed out that the mass media declaration contains certain fundamental elements for an international code of ethics, but that it is extremely difficult to formulate general principles for journalists and media in all the countries of the world. The conclusion reached by the commission was that it is desirable that codes be drawn up at a national level and in certain instances at a regional level, provided that these codes are prepared and adopted by the members of the profession themselves -without government interference. (MacBride et al 1980).

Unesco's six-year programme for the period 1977 to 1983 stated that Unesco would continue to contribute to the development of professional standards for the mass media, primarily through co-operation with the professional organizations in question. This emphasis on co-operation with the journalists' professional environment is a recurring theme in the studies of the working conditions of journalists which are a part of Unesco's work programme.

Since 1978 this co-operation has manifested itself in advisory meetings between the international and regional journalist organizations. At these meetings, which have taken place under the auspices of Unesco, representatives from both the IFJ and the IOJ have participated, as well as from Catholic, Arab, African, Asian and Latin American journalist associations. The agenda has included questions of professional ethics, the working conditions of journalists and co-operation on other matters of mutual interest. It appears that Unesco has met less resistance in this environment, where the organizations primarily represent practising journalists throughout the world, than in groups in which Western owner and publisher interests dominate.

At the fourth meeting between international and regional journalist organizations, which together represent four hundred thousand journalists, a set of international principles concerning journalistic professional ethics was drawn up. This meeting took place in the autumn of 1983. The principles established at this meeting are intended to be a common international starting point. They are to give inspiration for national and regional codes of ethics. Follow-up measures were left to each individual professional organization as it might see fit.

This set of principles of professional ethics emphasizes respect for universal values and distinctive cultures and the obligation to combat preparations for war. It also promotes work on a new international information and communication order. In addition, it states that "the foremost task of the journalist is to serve the people's right to true and authentic information through an honest dedication to objective reality whereby facts are reported conscientiously in their proper context, pointing out their essential connections and without causing distortions". Another principle establishes that journalistic information is to be understood as a social good and not as a commodity, which implies that the journalist shares responsibility for the information transmitted and is thus responsible not only to those who control the media but in the final analysis to the general public, including various social interests. "The journalists's social responsibility requires that he or she will act under all circumstances in conformity with a personal ethical consciousness".

Among all the proposals which have been drawn up as recommended international guidelines for codes of ethics, the declaration of principles of professional ethics, from autumn 1983, goes the furthest both in terms of specifying the international tasks of journalists and in maintaining their social responsibility and professional integrity in relation to those who own or run the media.

When examining the work Unesco has carried out regarding questions of press ethics, it is not easy to find evidence to support the claims that have been made that the organization is out to establish government control over the media. But these claims received renewed impetus in mid-February 1981 when Unesco arranged a small meeting of experts in Paris. This meeting dealt with the protection of journalists. Of all things, it was an initiative to secure press representatives against infringements which fanned the press campaign against Unesco into flames once more. For that reason it may be worthwhile to take a closer look at the matter.

The first initiative for international agreements on the protection of journalists was taken by the profession's own organizations as early as 1957. The International Federation of Chief Editors held a congress in Lisbon (Portugal) that year, at which the question of the protection of journalists on dangerous assignments was discussed at length. The congress decided to ask the

International Commission of Jurists to pursue the question further. In 1968 the Commission presented a draft international convention on the protection of journalists on dangerous assignments. This draft was revised following discussions with the International Press Institute, the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers and the Internatinal Federation of Journalists and was then unanimously approved at a meeting of the International Federation of Chief Editors in Montecatini (Italy) in May of 1968.

The principle provision in the draft convention prohibits the arrest of journalists or the imposition of other impediments on journalists who are engaged in carrying out their professional assignments. An international committee appointed by the organizations of the press is to ensure that this convention is observed. This committee is to issue identification cards to journalists. The parties to the agreement take it upon themselves to set penalties for those who do not conform to the rules of the convention.

The draft of 1968 was not followed up at once. But the matter gained momentum in 1970. At the beginning of the year seventeen foreign correspondents disappeared in Cambodia. The International Press Institute took the initiative of organizing two meetings on the situation in September of the same year. The following non-governmental organizations took part in these meetings : the International Federation of Journalists, the International Organization of Journalists, the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, the International Federation of Chief Editors, the International Commission of Jurists and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

The meetings reached two decisions. In the first place they requested that the UN draw up an international convention on the protection of journalists. In the second place they immediately established a "security committee" which was assigned the task of issuing security cards to journalists and of intervening where the security of journalists was threatened. The purpose of the latter measure was to commence practical protection of the profession at once, since work on a UN convention would necessarily take time.

In the late autumn of 1970, the UN General Assembly adopted its first resolution on the protection of journalists on dangerous assignments in areas of armed conflict. In this resolution, which had been proposed by France, the

General Assembly expressed its deep concern over the fact that correspondents lose their lives in attempting to execute their responsibilities regarding information. The General Assembly also called attention to the fact that existing provisions in international law concerning war did not give journalists sufficient protection. For that reason, the UN Human Rights Commission was asked to draw up an international agreement on the protection of journalists, including among other things an identification document which could be accepted throughout the world. It became evident that a number of member countries were sceptical of what they considered special treatment for journalists. The resolution was adopted when 81 delegations cast votes in its favour ; 32 delegations abstained from voting. The Nordic countries and most of the Western countries voted in favour, whereas the Eastern European countries abstained.

The Human Rights Commission adopted a draft international convention which for the most part was based on the groundwork carried out by the press organizations. France put forward a revised version of this proposal at the twenty-seventh session of the UN General Assembly in 1972, with Denmark and Finland among the joint proposers.

The principle provision in this draft is that the parties to the agreement are to provide every reasonable means of protection for journalists working in areas of armed conflict. If anything happens to them, information about the matter is to be given to those affected at once, including the international professional committee which is to be established to monitor the implementation of the convention. This committee is to be made up of nine recognized experts from various media, appointed by the UN Secretary General in consultation with the chairman of the Human Rights Commission. The committee is to issue identification cards to journalists. On the back of the card a statement is to be printed to the effect that the bearer of the card commits himself to act in accordance with the principles of journalistic integrity and to refrain from interfering in the domestic affairs of the host country or to take part in political or military activity which could entail participation in the hostilities.

Thus the draft convention balances rights and responsibilities. The parties to the agreement promise the journalists every reasonable means of protection. The journalists promise to limit themselves to their professional assignements.

Several proposals to amend the draft were put forward, and the matter was not presented for a final debate until the twenty-eighth session of the UN General Assembly in 1973. The deliberations resulted in a resolution in which the General Assembly declared that it was desirable to have a convention drawn up ensuring protection of journalists on dangerous assignments in areas of armed conflict. The existing draft, together with the proposals for amendment which had been put forward, was forwarded to the Diplomatic Conference on the Law of Warfare, which at that time was holding a series of meetings in Geneva.

The consideration of the matter at the Diplomatic Conference eventually resulted in the adoption in 1979 of a special article -number 79- in Additional Protocol no.1 to the Geenva Conventions of 12 August 1949. This article states that journalists are to be given the protections guaranteed to civilians, provided that they do not engage in activities which may deprive them of their civil status. In an appendix to the protocol a model identification card is shown which the authorities in a journalist's home country may issue. This was the final result for the time being of the initiative taken by the International Federation of Chief Editors in 1957.

The work of the UN for the protection of journalists had become more and more concentrated on the working conditions of correspondents during armed conflicts, and it ended with a clarification that international law governing war gives journalists the same protection as other civilians. When Unesco raised the issue, this was done in a wider context. Journalists are not only endangered when they cover military operations. They are sometimes threatened, maltreated, arrested or killed in countries with violent regimes or internal conflicts. And they need to have their professional integrity protected in countries without open violence as well.

In a working document for a seminar of experts arranged by Unesco in Florence in 1977, the threat which may be posed by concentration of private ownership was pointed out. If journalists are to be able to assume moral responsibility for their information activities, it would be desirable to institute arrangements which make it possible to combine ownership interests with the media's role of serving society. In Unesco's programme and budget for 1979-80, the Director-General was asked to place special emphasis on the question of effective protection for journalists, so that they could execute their assignments

under the best possible conditions with regard to accuracy and objectivity. Attaining agreement on a solution to this task would not prove to be easy.

In January 1980, Unesco arranged an adivsory meeting with the two leading international journalist organizations, IFJ and IOJ. Representatives from the organizations drew up a document in which the task in question was divided into four parts : defining who are journalists and discussing the protection of journalists on dangerous assignments, on ordinary foreign assignments and on ordinary assignments in their own countries, respectively. As a fifth, more long-range concern the document mentioned the establishment of possible international norms in this field.

The two journalist organizations were in agreement that the professional organizations would have to play a decisive role in issuing identification papers for journalists. If user-representatives were to take part in issuing the documents, these representatives ought to be appointed by judicial bodies -and not by Governments. With respect to journalists on dangerous assignments, the organizations felt that there was not time to wait until the UN managed to adopt an international convention. They supported the establishment of a commission of the same type as had been attempted ten years earlier under the auspices of the International Press Institute.

As far as foreign correspondents were concerned, the two organizations acknowledged a relationship between journalists' professional ethics and the protection they can expect from Governments. It would be possible to attain international recognition of the demands for favourable working conditions for correspondents without the establishment of professional guidelines for journalists. However, the responsibility for drawing up ethical guidelines would have to reside with the journalist organizations -and there only.

The two organizations also endorsed holding international conferences on a regular basis with representatives from the journalist organizations, the owners' organizations and government authorities in attendance in order to discuss the working conditions of journalists. These meetings ought to study reports from the Commission for the protection of journalists, as well as material on the situation for journalists in their home countries. And finally, the meeting of the two journalist organizations proposed the establishment of a world institute for press affairs.

The proposals from the meeting held by the two organizations were taken up three months later at one of the advisory meetings of the international and regional journalist organizations. This meeting endorsed the proposals and called for promptness in the work on international measures for the protection of journalists.

Parallel with these discussions, the MacBride Commission, too, considered the question of the protection of journalists. Unesco had appointed this commission to make a broad study of global communication problems. The President, the Irish Nobel Peace Prize winner Sean MacBride, had been the Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists when that commission a few years earlier had been called upon to assist in the work of drafting an international convention on the protection of journalists. Now he engaged himself in the matter again in the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems.

The subject of the protection of journalists was discussed at two seminars with representatives from the media. The members of the Commission considered the matter in a broad context. They maintained that it was not enough to ensure journalists protection against physical violence. Their independence and integrity should also be protected. The commission concluded that this could best be done by extending the general protection of human rights. If special protection were to be introduced for journalists, there was a risk of this leading to a licensing scheme which would enable Governments to determine who is a journalist and who is not. The commission came to the following conclusion : "Although problems concerning the protection of journalists are real and preoccupying, we share the anxiety aroused by the prospect of licensing and consider that it contains dangers to freedom of information". Mr. MacBride himself dissented from this conclusion, with which he strongly disagreed.

The MacBride Commission's dismissal of an international agreement on the protection of journalists rests entirely on the expectation that it would be Governments which would rule on who were journalists. However, all of the previous international proposals had postulated a different system. The 1968 draft adopted by the International Federation of Chief Editors left the issuance of international identification cards to an international commission established by the press organizations. The UN draft of 1972 place the responsibility with a commission of press representatives appointed by the Secretary-

General and the chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission. Subsequent meetings of journalists' organizations had stressed that the professional organizations themselves would have to have the decisive influence on the issuance of international identification cards for journalists.

It is true that the Additional Protocal to the Geneva Convention on International Law governing Warfare states that the authorities in the home country may equip journalists on dangerous assignments in other countries with an identification card confirming that the bearer is a journalist. But this is a right they have in any case -one from which correspondents often benefit.

This was the situation, then, when Unesco convened a new meeting of international and regional journalists' organizations in Paris on 16 and 17 February 1981. The main point of business at this meeting was to continue the discussions which had been begun earlier on the protection of journalists. The Unesco Secretariat had asked a French political scientist, Professor Pierre Gaborit, to draw up a working paper for the meeting. This paper contained a concrete proposal for the establishment of the measures the journalists' organizations had agreed upon in principle for improving the protection of journalists : an international commission, combined with international conferences on a regular basis (Gaborit, 1980).

The point of departure for Professor's Gaborit's working paper was that there did not seem to be any feasible way of establishing an international convention on the protection of journalists, at least not in the short run. The journalists' organizations themselves ought to take the initiative for establishing concrete international measures of protection. For that reason Professor Gaborit proposed the establishment of an international commission for the protection of journalists, composed of nine members who should all be members of the profession. Six of the members were to be appointed by international and regional journalists's organizations and the three remaining members by the International Commission of Jurists, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and the International Committee of the Red Cross. As conditions for journalists are dependent in the last analysis on the conduct of the individual country, Professor Gaborit felt that it should be possible in due time to consider including Government representatives as well in the commission.

In that event they could be appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN or by the Director-General of Unesco. Professor Gaborit proposed that the commission should concentrate first on the conditions for journalists on dangerous assignments, then consider the situation for foreign correspondents, and gradually approach the question of the working conditions of journalists in their own countries. The tasks of the commission ought to be to contribute to reducing the dangers which threaten journalists in areas of conflict, to study the working conditions of journalists working in foreign countries, and to compile reports on these conditions with proposals for improvements. The commission was also to study the working conditions for journalists in their own countries, and it ought to be able to investigate complaints of infringements. Finally, it should have the opportunity to carry out studies on journalistic professional ethics, with a view to promoting common attitudes.

As a part of its activities, the commission was to issue international identification cards to journalists, and it was to have the sole responsibility for doing so. Regarding the definition of who is a journalist, Professor Gaborit referred to the work which had been carried out in connection with the meeting between the two major journalist organizations IFJ and IOJ the previous year. That meeting had defined a journalist as any person who is engaged in regular paid employment as an editor, reporter, camera man, or the like in the press, broadcasting or filmed news services, and who executes his work in accordance with the ethical principles and practices which have been established by the profession itself. In this connection, Professor Gaborit mentioned that one of the tasks of the commission ought to be to gather material for the purpose of evaluating whether journalists on foreign assignments conduct themselves according to generally accepted ethical codes. This sentence would cause a lot of problems.

Finally, Professor Gaborit proposed that the reports of the commission be presented at international meetings or round table conferences every second year. Representatives of journalists' organizations,owners' associations, research institutions and Governments should be invited to these meetings. The Government experts should be selected by the Director-General of Unesco in accordance with ordinary procedures, such as ensuring a fair geographical distribution.

The working paper shows that Professor Gaborit did not go beyond the guidelines which had been advocated by the journalists' own organizations for years. These organizations were to have a decisive influence on the composition of the commission. It was this commission -and this commission only- which was to issue international identification cards for journalists. Professor Gaborit thereby weakened the basis for the uneasiness expressed by the MacBride Commission, which had feared that Governments would be responsible for this task.

It is sure that Professor Gaborit proposed that expansion of the commission to include Government experts should be considered at a later date. But this was a proposal to be considered at some time in the future, as experience was gained by the commission. The journalists' organizations were to be in control of developments in the matter themselves. The only two new elements in this scheme compared with the drafts from ten to fifteen years earlier -apart from the fact that the setting was now non-governmental- was that the commission was not only to concern itself with journalists on dangerous assignments, but eventually with the ordinary working conditions of journalists as well, and that the question of professional ethical conduct was more strongly emphasized.

Unesco had invited the same nine organizations which had previously taken part in the deliberations between international and regional journalists' organizations to the meeting in February 1981. However, prior to this meeting protests were received from a number of institutions which felt that Western points of view were insufficiently represented. The American Department of State gave voice to these protests vis-à-vis the Unesco Secretariat. Their application resulted in Unesco agreeing to invite four additional organizations, in which the interests of private owners were well represented : the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, the International Press Institute, the Inter-American Press Association (based in Miami), and the World Press Freedom Committee (based in the United States).

At this meeting, the agreement which had previously prevailed on international measures for the protection of journalists disintegrated. Drawing up a joint text proved impossible. The four recently invited organizations

adopted a statement in which they dismissed the establishment of any international organ with the task of identifying journalists. Alternatively, they asked Unesco to use its influence to encourage the Member States to respect the freedom of information.

The nine international and regional journalists' organizations for their part adopted a statement in which they confirmed the standpoint they had endorsed earlier, both in terms of protecting journalists from physical violence and in terms of securing their integrity from infringements by owners and government authorities. They asked Unesco to continue to study measures for the protection of journalists. As a first step, they proposed a round table conference, which could perhaps be developed into a permanent advisory organ for the protection of journalists, but the four new-comer organizations could not accept this proposal.

Every year Unesco arranges hundreds of meetings of experts of the same type as the meeting held on 16 and 17 February 1981. Normally, the press takes no notice of these activities. This time was different. The meeting resulted in a new outcry against Unesco. The recurring theme was that the organization had a plan to secure dictator regimes control of who was to be issued press cards and how journalists were to be allowed to write. But at the last moment Western press organizations had apparently become aware of this design and managed to stop it. A few examples will suffice to show how Professor Gaborit's working paper was interpreted.

The foreign news editor of Dagbladet (a leading Norwegian newsstand daily) wrote on 19 February 1981 that censorship was the key word in the matter and that Unesco wanted to create an organization which the Third World and the Eastern bloc could use in order to dictate to journalists how they should engage in reporting and to blacklist those who did not follow their guidelines. The New York Times wrote on 17 February 1981 about "ethical censorship in Unesco", claiming that the plan proved that Unesco's staff were trying to make themselves masters of who was to write what and where. Aftenposten (Norway's leading conservative newspaper) depicted the situation on 12 March 1981 in an article with the headline "Unesco an Instrument of Totalitarian Thinking". According to this article, the proposals from the Paris meeting would protect Governments against journalists -rather than the other way around.

Characteristic of this type of news flash reporting is the fact that the readers were given no opportunity to evaluate the situation in context. They were not informed that the same Western news organizations which now attacked Unesco so fiercely for the proposal had themselves previously taken the initiative in drawing us a similar system. They did not learn that Norway, together with other Western countries -and with widespread support from the press- had voted in the UN in favour of a commission which was to issue identification cards to journalists who took it upon themselves to act "in accordance with the principles for journalistic integrity". As a rule they did not learn either that the IFJ, to which most of the Western journalist associations belonged (including the Norwegian Union of Journalists), was in favour of the content of the proposal.

Most of the press coverage did not bring out the point that Professor Gaborit's so-called "proposal for licensing of journalists" emphatically stated that it was the journalists' own organizations which were to issue international press cards and the journalists' own organizations which were to work on the ethical questions. Nor was it particularly evident that the proposal had only been put forward in an expert study and that no responsible Unesco organ had taken a stand on it. Readers were not even given the possibility of seeing that Unesco could perhaps have laudable motives for considering the question of the protection of journalists, even though this concrete manifestation -rightly or wrongly- was controversial. The general tone was that Unesco intended to censor the world press.

There is no reason to believe that the lack of context and of historical perspective in this reporting was intentional. The explanation probably lies in the fact that those who conveyed the second and third-hand reports from the Paris meeting and commented on them simply did not know better.

A NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER

On 24 October 1980, Aftenposten, Norway's leading conservative newspaper, reported that at the twentieth session of the General Conference of Unesco, which was then being held in Belgrade, the developing countries and the Soviet Union were pressing for a restructuring which implied "Government control over the flow of news throughout the entire world". Paul Lewis wrote in the

New York Times on 2 June the following year that the plan the General Conference had adopted for a new international information order meant that journalists would have to support Government policies, endorse guidelines for information ethics and be issued identification cards which could be revoked if Unesco officials did not like what they wrote. In an article in Stavanger Aftenblad (a medium-sized Norwegian daily newspaper) in January 1984, Professor Jan Broegger wrote that "Unesco's well-orchestrated attack on the free Western press" under the slogan a new international information order aimed at "transforming world news distribution into government monopolies according to the Soviet pattern".

This is not the only coverage the media have given to the idea of a new international information and communication order. There have been examples of favourable coverage as well. But the examples cited illustrate a strong tendency in news and commentary on the new international information order. Therein justification may be found for considering more closely what the international resolutions on this new concept involve. Is the demand for a new information order a covert attempt to introduce a world-wide system of censorship ? Or what, actually, is it ?

The concept was used for the first time in the report from a symposium on the mass media in the non-aligned countries in Tunis in March 1976. This symposium was a manifestation of the co-operation which had developed among the non-aligned countries regarding news transmission and information development. At the fourth summit of non-aligned countries in Algiers, in September 1973, a programme of action had been adopted which encouraged the member countries to work for "reorganisation of existing communication channels, which are the legacy of the colonial past and which have hampered free, direct and fast communication between them". On a more practical level the programme proposed revision of cable tariffs, agreements on joint use of and guidelines for communication satellites, and increased contact and exchange of experience between the media institutions in the non-aligned countries. The Tunis symposium endorsed this programme. "Since information in the world shows disequilibrium in favouring some and ignoring others", said a resolution adopted by the symposium, "it is the duty of the non-aligned to change this situation and obtain the decolonisation of information, and initiate a new international order in information".

Thus the concept was created. It was clearly related to the demands of the non-aligned movement that the former colonial and semi-colonial countries had a right to an equal share in the global production of and trade in information.

At a conference of ministers from the non-aligned countries in New Delhi in July 1976, this train of thought was developed further. The conference adopted a declaration which stated, among other things, that the present global flow of information is characterised by serious deficiencies and inequalities. The great majority of countries are reduced to passive recipients of information which is transmitted from a few centres. In a situation in which the means of information are dominated and monopolized by a few agencies to spread information as they wish, at the same time that the rest are denied the right to inform and to be informed objectively and accurately. The declaration stated that the major international news agencies had ignored or distorted the foreign policy efforts of the non-aligned nations and that these nations had few possibilities of getting to know about each other through other channels.

The practical conclusions were once more along the lines of increased co-operation among the countries of the Third World for the purpose of achieving greater collective self-reliance. With a view to this goal, the participants at the conference recommended the establishment of an exchange arrangement among the non-aligned news agencies, which was later named the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries. The declaration claimed that the establishment of a new international information order is just as necessary as a new international economic order.

In this declaration the non-aligned countries had outlined the basic ideas behind their call for a new order in the field of information. Their demands were based first and foremost on the distribution of resources among countries. The non-aligned countries demanded a more even distribution of the information resources of the world. The means they prescribed were collective endeavours on the part of developing countries, such as the news pool, combined with international agreements on such matters as more favourable cable rates, guidelines for the use of communication satellites, redistribution of the access to frequency bands, and the like.

At the same time, their demands addressed the question of the content of information. The non-aligned movement was not only dissatisfied with the fact that distribution of information throughout the world was in the hands a few agencies ; it also criticized the existing news services for being biased and expressed the belief that a new order would better promote the right to be informed objectively and accurately. There was, then, a qualitative element in their conception of a new world order in the field of information. The aspect of freedom was mentioned but once, and that was in connection with the statement that freedom of information can only become a reality in the international community if all countries have a reasonable possibility of making use of it. But in this context the aspect of freedom was in fact included. The Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries did not play any part in the launching of the call for a new information order.

This new concept was mentioned for the first time in a UN resolution at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in 1978. From that year on, the General Assembly has passed an extensive resolution every year dealing with both the UN's own information activities and general international information issues. The resolution in 1978 was put forward by Tunisia on behalf of the Group of 77. The resolution included a paragraph on the necessity of establishing a new information and communication order in the world. The core of this paragraph has been repeated in each successive resolution, but the formulation has gradually been expanded.

The resolution from 1983 states that the new information and communication order is to be based on "the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, guaranteeing the diversity of sources of information and free access to information, and, in particular, of the urgent need to change the dependent status of the developing countries in the field of information and communication, as the principle of sovereign equality among nations extends also to this field". This paragraph continues by stating that the arrangement intends to strengthen peace, understanding and human rights, as well as "enabling all persons to participate effectively in political, economic, social and cultural life".

The first UN resolution on a new international information order was

adopted unanimously. In recent years there has been dissent on the information resolution. In 1982 the United States voted against it, while Israel abstained. In 1983 the United States , Israel and the United Kingdom voted against the resolution, with nine countries abstaining. In 1984 the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and the Netherlands voted against the resolution, while seven countries abstained. The paragraph on the new order had not been changed since the preceding year, but Western countries now wanted to include a phrase from Unesco's 22nd General Conference, describing the order as "an evolving and continuous process". The Group of 77 felt that this aspect was already taken well care of by other parts of the tex. It is evident that Western positions on the order concept has hardened since 1978. The formulations in the UN resolution are nevertheless the most authoritative international statements which exist concerning the new concept.

Compared with the initiative taken by the non-aligned movement, it is clear that the UN resolutions have been revised in a way which makes them more acceptable to the Western powers. The 1978 resolution called for not merely a new order, but a new, more just and more effective order. These qualifying adjectives could be interpreted as if it were more a case of improving the existing order than of creating something totally new. Since then the concept has been extended and amplified in three other directions.

In the first place, the name of the new order has been changed to include both information and communication. Information may be perceived as the contents of a message transmitted from sender to receiver. The word communication suggests the process of transmission among several participants and the resources this process requires.

In the second place, the aspect of freedom has entered the resolution in full force, in expressions such as "free circulation", "diversity of sources of information", and "free access to information". A balance has been established between the demand for freedom and "the urgent need to change the dependent status of the developing countries".

In the third place, the call for a new order also addresses the internal conditions in each country through its goals of promoting human rights

and enabling all persons to participate effectively in society. This orientation is also evident in the title. The UN resolution does not refer to a new international order, but rather to a new world information and communication order. It applies not only to the conditions pertaining to the flow of information between countries, but also to the conditions in each individual country throughout the world.

All these changes have been made to unite the demand for a new order with the attitude towards questions of freedom of the press which is prevalent throughout the West.

At the twentieth session of the General Conference of Unesco in 1978 the question of a new order aroused little interest. Most of the attention in the field of information was directed towards work on the media declaration. Nonetheless, a paragraph was included in one of the resolutions adopted at the General Conference stating that the Conference endorsed the efforts for establishing a new, more just and more effective information and communication order in the world. Twelve Western countries (but none of the Nordic countries) abstained from voting on the matter in the fourth commission. Their reasoning was that the General Conference ought not to take a stand on this issue until the MacBride Commission had submitted its final report on global communication questions. That same autumn, however, the very same countries voted in favour of an identical formulation in the UN.

It was at the twenty-first session of the General Conference in Belgrade in 1980 that Unesco began to work in earnest on the content of the new concept. The framework had been established by the MacBride Commission's report, Many Voices, One World, which had now been completed. (MacBride, 1980). This report, which contained a wealth of information on global communication problems, did not attempt any definition of the concept the non-aligned movement had launched. The commission maintained that the call for a new order derived from the conviction that information and communication are significant factors in international relations and decisive for the establishment of a new international system in which all countries and all peoples have equal rights, independence and unobstructed access to development.

At that stage in the debate, the Commission considered the concept as a frame of reference which would make it easier to enumerate problems, carry on a discussion in a context, and clarify the political choices which existed It was a question of beginning a long-term international process, the goal being practical action. The MacBride commission added, however, that a new order would not only require significant changes on the international level, but on the national level as well, in order to satisfy the communication needs of the poor peoples in the world.

During the debate at the General Conference, a number of speakers observed that the MacBride commission had established the framework for work on a new information and communication order. A few speakers, however, pointed out that the concept was still ambiguous, while others called for a more detailed clarification of the principles expressed. In the course of the debate several proposals for resolutions were put forward regarding international information issues, and a special committee was appointed to attempt to combine the proposals into a text which could be accepted unanimously. With the help of arduous negotiations this was finally achieved. As this resolution contains the most detailed outline for the new order which has yet been proved within the UN system, this outline is here reproduced in its entirety.

In paragraph 13 of this long resolution the Director-General is instructed to initiate studies necessary for the formulation of practical proposals for the establishment of a new world information and communication order and to convene an international meeting of experts for that purpose. Paragraph 15 expresses the wish that Unesco contribute to the clarification, elaboration and application of the new concept in both the short and the long run. In paragraph 14 -the essence of the resolution- the General Conference states that :

"(a) this new world information and communication order could be based, among other considerations, on :

(i) elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation ;

(ii) elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, and excessive concentrations ;

(iii) removal of the internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas ;

(iv) plurality of sources and channels of information ;

(v) freedom of the press and information ;

(vi) the freedom of journalists and all professionals in the communication media, a freedom inseparable from responsibility ;

(vii) the capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their personnel, by improving their infrastructures and by making their information and communication media suitable to their needs and aspirations ;

(viii) the sincere will of developed countries to help them attain these objectives ;

(ix) respect for each people's cultural identity and for the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values ;

(x) respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchanges of information on the basis of equality, justice and mutual benefit ;

(xi) respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process ;

(b) this new world information and communication order should be based on the fundamental principles of international law, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations ;

(c) diverse solutions to information and communication problems are required

because social, political, cultural and economic problems differ from one country to another and, within a given country, from one group to another".

There was general satisfaction at Unesco's General Conference that agreement had been reached on an issue which had been so controversial in the world press, and which had been expected to cause so much disagreement. The resolution was, however, a compromise, and in statements explaining their votes many delegations made it clear that there were aspects of the resolution which they would have wanted to be different.

With regard to the formulation concerning a new information and communication order, a number of Western countries expressed reservations about the studies called for in paragraph 13. The British delegation was the most critical, claiming among other things that paragraph 14 contained too many negative formulations and that it placed too much emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of Governments and too little emphasis on the rights of individuals. Several Western countries had problems accepting sub-section (ii), on monopolies, despite the fact that this sub-section cautioned against both public and private monopolies. With regard to sub-section (vi), on the freedom and responsibility of journalists, several delegations made it clear that they had joined in the general agreement on the condition that it was the profession itself which would interpret and enforce this responsibility -and not Governments Yet apart from Switzerland, which did not take part in the deliberations, the Western countries found that in spite of their reservations, the fundamental principles they believed in were preserved to such an extent that they could unanimously support the resolution.

This is not surprising if paragraph 14 is considered point by point. In the first place it is worth noting that the eleven considerations which are listed under section (a) are neither final nor exhaustive. The resolution expressly states that these are considerations the new order could be based on, among other considerations. The new information and communication order is, then, depicted as a process which must be further developed.

In the second place, traiditional Western points of view are well

represented in the eleven conditions specified. Individual freedom, pluralism and the right to participate are mentioned in a total of five sub-sections (iii, iv, v, vi and xi). The demand for internal freedom within the individual country is broadly established. The right of peoples or of nations to participate in international exchange -an aspect which is often emphasized by both developing countries and Eastern European countries- is mentioned in two of the sub-sections (ix and x). Four of the sub-sections deal with the elimination of inequalities and monopolies and with strengthening the capacities of the developing countries (i, ii, vii and viii). Only one of the sub-sections (vi) touches on the question of responsibility, which the Eastern European countries strongly emphasize -and then only as a counterpart to the freedom of journalists. The responsibilities of the media in terms of conveying meaningful information on national and international issues are not mentioned at all. Finally, section(b) refers to international law, while section (c) encourages diverse solutions in various countries.

It is not easy to see that Unesco in this resolution has voted to make international news transmission the province of government monopolies. The formulations are first and foremost a compromise between developing and developed countries. There is in fact good reason for understanding the wording of this resolution as an attempt to pave the way for genuine freedom of information throughout the world.

In the resolution adopted by the General Conference, the Director-General was instructed to convene an international meeting of experts in order to consider the basis for a new information and communication order. This meeting took place in Innsbruck in October 1983, in the form of a round table conference arranged jointly by Unesco and the UN. The conference proceeded without ideological clashes. It did not adopt any formal statements, but the results of the discussion have been summarized in a detailed report. In the course of the debate, it was pointed out that a new order is developing in any case owing to technological advances. The question is what shape this new order is to take. There was wide-spread agreement among the participants that the development of a new information and communication order is a gradual process which ought not to be the subject of controversy as long as the new order is not established at the expense of freedom of expression but rather leads to increased freedom.

A most interesting extension of the debate on the new order took place at the non-aligned conference on the media - NAMEDIA - which was held in New Delhi in December 1983. This was a meeting attended by practising journalists, media researchers and information authorities from the non-aligned countries. It was the first time practising press professionals from these countries were actively drawn into the discussion of the content of the demands for a new information and communication order.

The NAMEDIA debate produced concrete, discerning and radically new points of view. The resolutions from the conference stressed the fact that developing countries must create their own communication technology, suited to local needs and economic possibilities. An important requirement for this technology is that it can be made available to the local community and engage local resources.

For the first time, feminist perspectives were included in a non-aligned resolution on the new order. An active group of women at the conference proposed a text which stated that the new order would be just as much a distortion as the old one unless all oppressed groups -and particularly women- were granted full access to the media. The male majority was not willing to go that far. But the women were responsible for the inclusion in the resolution of unambiguous demands for the participation of both sexes in communication and for the presentation by the media of a realistic picture of the conditions determining the lives of women. Thus they contributed to adding a new and significant dimension to the concept of a new information and communication order.

It is equally interesting to note that the participants at the conference in New Delhi did not limit themselves to criticizing the Western media, but also undertook a critical evaluation of media practices within the non-aligned countries. Attention was directed to the obstacles which inhibit the flow of information within the countries of the Third World. The declaration adopted by NAMEDIA states that media professionals in the non-aligned countries are not only engaged in surmounting international inequalities but also strive to extend the domain of freedom in their own countries. (NAMEDIA, 1983). This is an illustration of the fact that the call for a new information order contains possibilities for freeing creative forces.

III. THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

The communication systems of the industrialized countries are establishing themselves in the countries of the southern hemisphere, with press and radio, films and television and all that these systems comprise in the way of technology, working style and contents. This transfer began in colonial times, and it has continued as one manifestation of the typical pattern of economic relations between South and North. The poor countries are drained of raw materials and labour. At the same time, they purchase industrial goods, expertise and consumption patterns from the industrialized countries. To the extent that the imitation of the media structure of the industrialized world has been planned -but of course it need not have been- it seems to be based on two assumptions : 1) that these structures serve good purposes in the industrialized countries, and 2) that they will also function well in the conditions existing in poor countries. Both of these assumptions are debatable.

Bella Mody, an Indian communication researcher, has studies the second assumption and shown that it is not possible to evaluate whether a communication system is expedient without considering it in the light of the social structure it is to function within. Information needs are not the same in poor countries, where most people struggle to meet their basic survival needs, as in rich countries, where most people live in luxury. "In First World societies, the older mass media grew because they sold masses of consumers to product manufacturers through the purchase of advertizing time and space. In Third World economies where there are limited numbers of buyers for goods other than essentials, it is difficult for the media to be completely financed on this basis. Apart from this difference in the economic context, the political context of Third World countries is that of young nations that are very vulnerable to superpower rivalries". Held back by decades of colonialism, they are outwardly dependent on foreign technology and capital and internally dominated by a small domestic elite made up of industrial leaders, landowners, bureaucrats, military leaders and a single national political party. "The social fabric of Third World countries is similarly distinct, characterized as it is by major national and sub-national differences in race, tribe, religion, language and the like, and the lack of homogznizing influences like universal schooling that make single-language single-audience 'mass' programming possible in First and Second World countries. (Mody, mimeo n.d.)

During the first decades following the Second World War, however, there were few people who were aware of the fact that the same media would not function identically within different social structures. The mass media in the United States and in other Western countries seemed to have proved their effectiveness in terms of both marketing and political influence. Why should these magic means not be used to stimulate growth and progress in the developing countries as well ? Well-intentioned people in Unesco sought advice from American communication researchers in the expectation that the power of the media would promote literacy, convey information on health, nutrition and agriculture and contribute to national development among the independent peoples of the countries of the southern hemisphere.

Printing presses and broadcasting equipment were exported to developing countries without any realisation of the fact that the technology involved, and the programmes which followed in its wake, were created for societies of an entirely different nature. Deplorable examples of poor investments may be found in the form of television stations purchased at far too high a price without the equipment for filming and recording out-of-doors, mobile audiovisual units unsuitable for use on local roads, or cannibalistic teleprinters : the lack of spare parts meant that one machine would be taken to pieces to keep the other one functioning.

The developing countries have paid for most of this transfer of technology with precious currency. The field has been profitable for the major producers and transnational companies. The financial transfers which have been registered in the OECD statistics on development aid show that only 5 per cent of the total transfers for communication purposes at the beginning of the 80s were in the form of gifts. Loans on special terms accounted for forty per cent, and the rest was ordinary business credits. The two largest suppliers, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, concentrated most of their credit benefits on a few enormous projects. Japan and France, who were the next biggest suppliers spread their export credits over many more projects. But it is obvious that advanced communication technology is of great importance for all development aid in communication.

An official Swedish report points out that Sweden contributed a total of some 600 million kroner in communication aid in 1978 and 1982, of which

160 million was in the form of credits. Most of this amount, however, was used for developing telecommunications. Only 5 per cent, or 30 million kroner, went to the development of mass media. The report shows that Sweden participates with considerable activity on a commercial basis, particularly as far as the development of telecommunications systems is concerned. This applies first and foremost to L.M. Ericsson and the consultancy firm for the Swedish telecommunications administration, Swedtel, which have been responsible for a number of deliveries within the framework of a particularly favourable credit arrangement financed by means of development aid. According to the report there has been a great demand for Swedish technology and equipment.

A study carried out by experts for the Swedish directorate for development aid, SIDA, stresses the fact that most developing countries have a tendency to exaggerate their own need for modern technology. This attitude is taken advantage of by exporting firms in the industrialized countries. The SIDA study claims that Sweden has not fulfilled its obligations to support communication development in the Third World. What the developing countries need in this field is training for journalists and other personnel, expansion of the press, radio, television, news agencies, and so on. According to the study, Swedish development aid officials have adopted a wait-and-see attitude towards media aid because it has been deemed politically controversial. They have not heeded the consequences of the significance of communication for the development process, as a democratizing force, as a means of mobilizing the population, as a conveyer of new knowledge (health, agriculture, community development, etc.) and as a culture-bearing and cohesive national factor. (Hedebro and Rappe, 1983).

The official Swedish report on media aid resulted in the formulation of guidelines for Sweden's further activities in this field. In a budget proposition to the Riksdagen (the Swedish parliament) in 1983, the Government announced that the organs which administer aid funding ought to increase Swedish support for a democratic media development. This should apply also to activities in the international organs in which Sweden had particularly emphasized media aid, the proposition stated.

Few persons would challenge the fact that there is a correlation between communication and development. "Communication does not in itself create the improved conditions of life which are the aim of development aid

in the final analysis, but more deep-rooted social changes cannot take place without well planned and substantiated communication". (Hedebro and Rappe, 1983). On the other hand, there is greater uncertainty as to what conditions are necessary in order for communication to promote development. Since the 1970s, communications researchers have increasingly stressed the fact that people in local communities need media which they themselves can utilize in efforts for social change.

One of the leading American experts in this field, Wilbur Schramm, published a book with the title Mass Media and National Development in 1964, based on the optimistic expectation that information distributed via the mass media would trickle down through society from the top to the bottom. In 1979, he mercilessly rejected his previous thinking : "The focus should be on local activity and decision making, on the agriculture and village sector, on labor-intensive rather than capital-intensive work, and on unlocking local strengths and people strengths as a basis for building and utilizing the strengths of industry. Throughout all this runs a strong current of self-reliance". Based on this new view as to the foundation for development, Wilbur Schramm found that he had to revise his conception of the tasks of the media : they are "essentially designed for vertical top-down communication, and the new order has less need of media to lead the downward flow of information from the centre than to support the horizontal flow of communication at the bottom-interpersonal communication, local organization, and local media".(Schramm, 1979).

It is difficult to estimate the extent of the transfer of communication technology in financial terms within the framework of North-South relations. Statistics seldom list communication as a separate sector. Development aid organizations rarely have a clearly defined policy in this field. Reaching a simple, consistent definition of the concept of communication is also problematic. But studies which have been carried out within Unesco show that efforts in the field of communication have never reached one per cent of the financial transfers from North to South. This figure gives us food for thought when we remember that postal service, telephone, telegraph and the mass media account for 5 to 6 per cent of the gross national product in Norway. But it may also be useful to recall the general framework for financial transfers from North to South.

In recent years the total level of international aid to developing

countries has declined. The Brandt commission pointed out that whereas 60 per cent of the total transfers in 1960 were in the form of aid, the proportion given as aid had sunk to between 3o and 40 per cent by the end of the 1970s. In 1980, tow- thirds of all development aid was granted within the framework of bilateral arrangements. The remaining one-third of total develoment aid is administered through multilateral channels. Among them we find the ordinary organizations in the UN system, the UN development programme UNDP and special financial institutions such as the World Bank Group and the regional development banks. However, the aid budgets of these organizations are dependent on voluntary contributions, with the result that the major contributors make themselves felt with noticeable force. In some of the institutions, such as the powerful World Bank Group, a system of weighted votes pertains, so that a small group of rich countries holds the majority.

A NEW STRATEGY IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION ?

At inter-governmental conferences towards the end of the 1970s, representatives of industrialized countries on more than one occasion aired the idea of a new initiative in terms of international communication development. This idea was brought about both by the developing countries' call for a new international information order and by the problems Unesco had become involved in through the controversy on the media declaration. Representatives from the industrialized countries put forward the idea that it might be easier to moderate the ideological controversy if the devloping countries were offered practical help in expending their own communication services.

On the part of some of them, for instance the participants from the Nordic countries, these were no doubt honest intentions, as they felt that practical assistance was bound to be more useful than controversy. For others, this initiative was probably more of a tactical move. In any case, this exchange of opinion resulted in the establishment of a new institution : the International Programme for the Development of Communication, IPDC.

An American initiative at the twentieth session of the General Conference of Unesco in 1978 provided the impetus for the establishment of the IPDC. In his main speech, the leader of the American delegation stated that if the countries of the world were not to be forever divided into two camps -the

information rich and the information poor- it would be necessary to organize systematic, long-range, concerted international co-operation for communication development. Despite disagreement on information issues, he felt that there were certain common goals on which there was broad agreement, as expressed in such shared institutions as Unesco, and which made it natural to share the burdens in common : "Those goals include the steady reduction of disparities and dependencies and imbalances in communication capacities, and the progressive fostering of many-sided dialogues rather than monologues...".

The American delegation put forward a proposal that Unesco convene a planning meeting to formulate a draft for institutional arrangements for systematic co-operation and consultation on communication development. The General Conference agreed by consensus to convene a meeting of the type the United States had proposed. Following a preliminary conference in Washington in November 1979, the planning meeting was held in Paris in April 1980. After extensive deliberations, the planning meeting resolved by consensus to request Unesco to establish an International Programme for the Development fo Communication. In late autumn that same year the twenty-first session of the General Conference of Unesco heeded that request and founded the IPDC. This decision, too, was unanimous.

Through this series of unanimous decisions, Governments throughout the world had taken it upon themselves to strengthen co-operation on communication development and to assist those countries which were poor in information resources to surmount the gap which separated them from the rich countries. The initiative came from the Western countries. The Nordic countries had been among the first to speak out in favour of strengthening communication development within the framework of Unesco. And at the General Conference in 1978, the representative of the United Kingdom declared : "If we interpret the call for a 'new world information order' as the expression of a set of aspirations, we must, as governments, provide generous aid to improve physical communications". The United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy were among the joint proposers of the American resolution. This resolution stated that the General Conference valued the increased willingness on the part of Governments and institutions to render practical assistance in this field. As so ofthen is the case, however, the distance betweeen words and actions proved to be great. The unanimous decisions cloaked divergent

attitudes as to how the work should be organized and who ought to be responsible. We shall return to this disagreement later. Let us first describe the framework of the new institution.

The resolution adopted by the General Conference states that "this international programme, aiming to increase co-operation and assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and to reduce the gap between various countries in the communication field, must form part of the efforts for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order". The General Conference approved the recommendation of the planning meeting, which stated that development of appropriate infrastructures, equipment, training programmes and resources in order to increase the capacity to communicate is essential if it is to be possible to surmount the gap which presently exists in this field "within, as well as mong, nations". The phrase just quoted makes it abundantly clear that the right to communicate also pertains to individuals and groups within each individual country. Although the new programme aims at practical measures, the recommendation also includes the usual ideological assurances. The General Conference reaffirmed that "it is indispensable to change the state of dependency of developing countries in the field of information and communication by assuring a wider and better balanced circulation and dissemination of information among all partners and by guaranteeing the diversity of sources and free access to information".

In the basic texts adopted at the Unesco General Conference, the objectives of the IPDC are expressed in fourteen points. (Unesco, 1984). They may logically be divided into four main categories :

1. Assistance. The IPDC is to assist developing countries, at their request, with analysis of their communication needs and with planning and development of their capacity in the field of communication, in particular concerning the contribution of communication to endogenous economic, social and cultural development. The IPDC is also to promote reciprocal consultations among institutions in the developing countries.

2. Co-ordination. The IPDC is to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination among all the parties which are engaged in international communication development, both within and outside the UN system. The IPDC is also to encourage

contact between those who require assistance and those who can offer the needed assistance.

3. Information. The IPDC is to gather information on global needs and resources, study the experience which is gained on international co-operation in the field of communication development, and contribute to increased awareness as to the significance of communication for the development process.

4. Financing. The IPDC is to seek to encourage contributions to communication projects from all available sources and to mobilize the resources which are needed to carry out the first three tasks.

This is a very broad mandate. The four objectives encompass essentially everything which touches on international communication development. For this reason, one of the first challenges facing the IPDC Council was to decide on a realistic limitation of their esponssibilities. Concerning basic investments in telecommunications, which are vastly expensive, the IPDC has thus far limited itself to a cautious participation in such projects as are of immediate significance for mass communication. The main emphasis has been placed on increasing the capacity to use those means of communication which are available to poor countries at a reasonable price. But experience has shown that in this field as well, priorities must be established and criteria drawn up to strengthen activities which truly benefit the groups which are in greatest need of increased opportunities for communication.

At their second meeting, held in Acapulco, Mexico in January 1982, the IPDC Council decided to give priority to eight different areas of activity as far as approving and financing projects was concerned. The first area deals with planning and research, in particular in those countries having the least developed communication systems. The next area has to do with the basic investments which are necessary for producing, storing, disseminating and receiving information, with the main emphasis on the development of endogenous technology and expertise. Other priorities are the development of media infrastructures, training of media professionals in all areas of communication, reciprocal co-operation among developing countries, and the use of communication to promote development in other areas, such as education, agriculture, health services and rural development. A final point mentions access to recent commu-

nication technology such as satellites and data banks on the part of developing countries

At the same meeting, the IPDC Council agreed on seven criteria to be used in the final selection of projects. IPDC projects ought to take into consideration the cultural identity, educational needs and general orientation in the countries and regions involved. These projects should promote development and result in increased self-reliance in the field of communication. They should be of such a nature that they produce further changes in society. They should result in increased exchange of information both domestically and with other countries. They should increase the capacity to receive and disseminate information for individuals and groups in local communities in rural and urban areas. Lastly, IPDC projects should respond to the needs in those countries having the least developed communication systems. Briefly stated, these are the objectives and framework of the international programme Governments throughout the world agreed to initiate in order to assist the peoples in developing countries to increase their communications capacity. (Unesco, 1984).

AN ATTEMPT AT JOINT INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The Unesco General Conference appointed a Council, consisting of representatives from 35 Member States, to implement the international communication programme. As established in the statutes, the council members are to be elected for four year terms, with half of the council to be replaced every second year. The members are elected on the basis of equitable geographic distribution, with the specification that the seats are to rotate among Member States from each regional group. The statutes state that Member States should preferably choose representatives for the council who have professional insight into one or more of the various fields of communication. The Council elects an internal working committee (the Council's Bureau) consisting of a chairman, three vice-chairmen, a rapporteur and three other members. In reality the Council has elected specific persons for the positions of chairman and rapporteur, whereas the other positions have been assigned to Member States who then appoint a person for the position.

Although the IPDC was established within the framework of Unesco, the programme has been guaranteed independence by granting the Council complete

control of the moulding and implementation of the programme. According to the statutes, it is the responsibility of the Council to achieve the objectives of the IPDC. The Council is to administer the funds which are made available for the programme, distributing them to projects and activities according to criteria and priorities determined by the Council itself. The Council is to evaluate the results attained, specify areas which call for increased international co-operation and investigate how Member States can effectively contribute to the realisation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication. The Council is also responsible for establishing an appropriate system for financing the programme and raising the funds required so that the IPDC will be able to accomodate applications for assistance from developing countries.

The Director-General of Unesco is responsible for making the necessary secretariat services available to the IPDC. A separate IPDC secretariat has been established within Unesco's administration, consisting of a director, an executive officer and two assistants. The expenses for the Council and secretariat are channeled through Unesco's ordinary budget, so that they do not require development aid funds. This secretariat is far too small to be able to handle all the tasks the IPDC has been assigned. Nor was this the intention. For reports, preliminary studies, evaluation and other tasks the secretariat can apply to other organs within Unesco for assistance, especially the other offices in the communication division. The secretariat may also engage consultants from other research institutions not associated with Unesco, and in addition to-operate with other organizations within the UN system. The IPDC is to function as a catalyst, stimulating and giving rise to new activities in the surrounding environment.

What we have described above is an attempt to build up a global development programme shaped through truly international decision-making. In that respect the IPDC is similar to several other organs within the UN system. But it stands out strongly from some of the influential financial institutions of the World Bank type, in which the rich nations control the vote. In the governing instances of the IPDC, countries from all parts of the world are proportionally represented. Each country has one vote. That means that the poor countries hold the majority.

This question caused a great deal of dispute when the statutes for the IPDC were drawn up. The United States with the support of several of the leading countries in the Western group, tried to establish the principle that all decisions were to be reached by consensus. The principle of consensus implies that an issue is worked on until it is finally possible to reach a unanimous decision -a decision such that no country or group refuses to accept it. Experience has shown, however, that in reality unanimity is often only on the surface ; Member States frequently follow-up so-called consensus decisions with explanations of their votes which indicate that they actually disagree with the decision. In any case, the developing countries in the IPDC refused to accept a set of statutes which would imply that any country could submit a formal veto.

The solution adopted was a formulation which states that all decisions -apart from questions concerning changes in the order of business- may be reached by a simple majority. But the Council is preferably to seek a consensus. This the Council has done. As of yet it has never been necessary to decide any matter in the IPDC Council by a vote. And consensus has been genuine. It has never been succeeded by position statements which could have reopened controversy.

When the IPDC was to be launched, the Western group and the Group of 77 reached an informal agreement that the first Director ought to be a person from the Third World. The candidate who was later chosen was Mr. Sarath Amunugama from Sri Lanka. At the same time, the Council should be chaired by a person from one of the industrialized countries during its first period. The Norwegian candidate was elected chairman at the statutory meeting in 1981 and re-elected for a second term in 1983. The position was bestowed on the author of this study.

Thus the IPDC had a purpose and a staff. But would the staff get the tools which it needed to realise the goals of the programme ?

THE POWER OF THE PURSE

When the IPDC was established, two opposing views presented themselves as to where control over the funds available should reside. As we have seen, it was the United States which took the initiative resulting in the establishment of the IPDC. But what the American initiators actually had in mind was to establish a liaison body which would allow the contributior to retain unlimited

power as to how the funds were to be used. An organ in which the developing countries were in the majority was not to administer funds which, according to the premises, were to be contributed primarily by the affluent countries.

As could be expected, the prepresentatives of the developing countries had an entirely different intention. They wanted the IPDC to be furnished with a fund which the Council could freely allocate within the framework of the objectives of the programme and within the framework of guidelines established by joint agreement. The demand for control by donors was up against the demand for collective responsibility. Behind this controversy there was deep-rooted disagreement as to the influence of the industrialized countries on the development of economic and social conditions in the poor countries.

The model promoted by the United States was an advisory group for international communication development. This group was to be open to any industrialized country making financial transfers to developing countries, to major international financial institutions and to a limited number of developing countries. Even though the affluent countries would command a dominant position in such a group, the intention was not that this group was to manage funds placed under its control. On the contrary, it was to stimulate and co-ordinate bilateral aid in the field of communication. When deliberations in the group resulted in one of the member countries deciding to finance a communication project, it was to do so within the framework of its own policies and practices in this field. It is quite possible that this model could result in a better distribution of tasks among various aid organizations and that it could result in increased efforts in the field of international communication development. But the affluent countries would retain the power to determine what was to be carried out, how it was to be carried out and whom it was to benefit. The new instrument was to be refused to a sort of clearing house.

If we consider Nordic aid to developing countries, it may not perhaps seem so appalling that the doner country wishes to have control over the use of funds. It is true that this type of control is probelmatic in Nordic aid programmes, too, as it does not promote self-help nor the development of responsible international decision-making. But within Nordic development aid the tradition is strong that aid should be employed in a way which benefits the poorest groups.

The issue becomes far more problematic as soon as the situation concerns transfers from a super-power to one of the developing countries. Then the strategic and economic interests of the donor country enter the picture on a completely different scale ; donor control is much more likely to become a means of securing external forces control over the development in the recipient country. It is against this background we ought to consider the international debate on the choice between bilateral and multilateral aid systems.

The primary goal of the developing countries was an international fund for communication development. This fund should contain considerable means in order to be fully able to finance significant efforts to meet the basic communication needs of the Third World. In order to prevent the fund from being at the mercy of the whims of the affluent donor countries, it should preferably be guaranteed stable, reliable revenues, such as some type of international tax. Alternatively, it should be based to the greatest possible extent on long-term commitments for voluntary contributions. The fund would have to be controlled by an organ in which the various groups of countries of the world would be proportionally represented and in which each vote carried equal weight. This was a solution which would place the power in the hands of the representatives of the poor countries. Considering the existing distribution of power, these representatives hardly expected the affluent countries to consent willingly to ensuring the financial basis for an arrangement based on such a degree of solidarity. Nor did they do so.

The result of the negotiations which took place before the IPDC was established was that the new institution combined elements from both of the main proposals. As far as the decision-making process is concerned, the pattern proposed by the developing countries was adopted. All geographic regions are proportionally represented in the Council, and each vote carries equal weight. But majority rule was modified by the decision that the Council is primarily to attempt to achieve consensus. A flexible arrangement was adopted regarding working methods. The IPDC is to take part in financing projects with the help of funds which are made available to the programme. The IPDC is also to act as a stimulating and co-ordinating agent for all international co-operation in the field of communication development.

The leading industrialized countries maintained their opposition to

automatic financing for multilateral development efforts. The funding and financing system which the IPDC has been charged with building up is dependent on voluntary contributions. The controversy between the developing countries and the dominant industrialized countries as to which means this system was to employ continued after the institution had been established.

The principal demand of the developing countries was naturally that the system ought to manage funds which were made available with no conditions attached. Such fundings can take place by means of contributions to the special account which was established for the IPDC -provided that the member countries are willing to make contributions. It was also agreed that the programme should be able to accept offers of assistance in the form of goods and services, such as training scholarships and expert services. A third form of financing which was approved for the IPDC was Funds-in-Trust arrangements. What they amount to is an agreement that one or more donor countries finance a project carried out by an international organization in one or more developing countries. As the IPDC does not have its own machinery for carrying out projects, the programme in this case functions as a framework for co-operative efforts. The execution of the project has to be entrusted to other organs within Unesco or to the International Telecommunications Union or other international organizations having the necessary expertise. Thus agreement was reached on three types of project financing.

However, the United States (with the support of a few other countries) insisted that the financing system should also be able to make use of so-called sponsor agreements. The donor countries would look through the lists of projects for which the IPDC requested assistance and if they so desired they would finance one or more of these projects on a purely bilateral basis. In terms of Funds-in-Trust financing, the IPDC Council can endorse a project because its execution is based on an agreement which the IPDC itself, as well as other international organizations, is a party to. But as far as bilateral arrangements are concerned, it is not possible for the IPDC to influence the execution of the project. The developing countries adopted the stance that there was nothing inherently wrong in donor countries taking it upon themselves to carry out particular projects -provided that the recipient agreed- but that these projects could no longer be considered IPDC projects. This was the final result. In reality it is natural to consider this type of bilateral arrangements as a part

the IPDC's co-ordinating function. But they do not belong to the IPDC's own financing system.

Thus the International Programme for the Development of Communication can at present make use of three types of voluntary contributions : contributions directly to the special account, contributions in the shape of goods and services, and the undertaking of Funds-in-Trust financing. With the help of this resource and financing system the IPDC is working to fulfil its first task, which is to contribute directly to communication development in countries who need it. In addition, the IPDC has two other tasks to carry out : a co-ordinating function, and an evaluating and informative function.

Although the industrialized countries agreed to the establishment of a special account for contributions to the IPDC, this did not mean that they were willing to contribute funds to the account. The Council of the IPDC, Unesco's General Conference and the UN General Assembly have all repeatedly directed unanimous appeals to Member States to contribute to the International Programme for the Development of Communication. But the fact that a country votes in favour of such an appeal does not mean that it feels obliged to respond to that appeal itself. Getting funds for the special account has been uphill work, and some of the largest and wealthiest countries have not made any contribution. Creating instruments for joint international action is a protracted struggle. When opposition to a new organ has finally been surmounted, its opponents make themselves felt once more by denying its resources.

By June 1985, when the IPDC had not yet existed for three years, some 8.6 million dollars in convertible currency had been pledged to the special account. Of this amount, approximately 8 million dollars had been paid in. In addition some 5 million dollars had been pledged for Funds-in-Trust financing, and approximately 7.3 million in the form of promised expert services, scholarships and non-convertible contributions. All in all, then, the IPDC had at that time pledges for contributions valued at between 20 and 21 million dollars, of which between 5 and 6 million dollars was convertible currency which the IPDC could freely utilize for projects. Part of the remaining amount was contributed on conditions which did not always make it easy to turn it to account. During 1984 a number of additional pledges were received. But that does not change the main impression ; resources available to the IPDC are far too small

compared with the extent of the needs the IPDC is to assist in meeting.

Thirty-two countries had pledged contributions to the special account by June 1985. There are two characteristics which stand out when the list of donors is considered. One of them is that Norway, with three contributions totalling 3.5 million dollars, has contributed about half of the total amount. The other striking feature is the fact that 24 of the 32 countries are developing countries of the world. The contributions from the developing countries are for the most part small, but they serve as concrete evidence that the developing countries place emphasis on the IPDC and that they themselves would like to participate in shouldering some of the burden for realising the programme.

Second in line after Norway by June 1985 was the USSR, which had contributed 1.700.000 dollars (of which 700.000 in roubles). These two countries were followed by Japan, with 900.000 dollars, France with 730.000 dollars and India with 400.000 dollars, Venezuela with 250.000 and Canada with 200.000 dollars. It appeared that Norway, Japan, USSR, India and France had introduced the practice of making regular annual contributions to the IPDC. There were signs indicating that a few other countries, too, would follow their example.

Funds-in-Trust contributions had been pledged by the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States and Sweden, as of June 1985. In addition, the IPDC was in the process of negotiating with several other countries which had expressed willingness to contribute to the programme. The largest offers of expert services and scholarships had been made by the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Germany.

There are two different ways of looking at this situation. One of them has been used above, comparing the resources available for the IPDC with the global needs for international co-operation in communication development. The conclusion then is that the results so far have not been good. The other way of looking at it is by comparing the contributions to the IPDC with what it may be realistic to expect at a time when international development aid is on the decline. From that point of view the results are not so bad. The spread of donors to the IPDC is unusual. The programme receives contributions from countries in the South as well as in the North, from the East as well as from

the West. The response may seem promising in comparison with how things look for some of the other new aid arrangements within the UN system. Each of these methods of approach tells us something about the realisties of the situation. But, unfortunately, the fact that other institutions of this type have even less to make do with does not help the poor countries of the world.

The difficulties of the IPDC faces in trying to raise funds -primarily for the special account- are due to several factors. One important reason is the fact that several of the largest industrialized countries disapprove of the establishment of multilateral organs which are capable of carrying out practical measures without themselves being in control of what is being done. The fact that the IPDC is kept to a limited level of activity is related to a decided unwillingness to strengthen the effectiveness of the UN system.

A second reason is that the IPDC is also affected by the particular uneasiness felt by certain circles in the Western countries that an institution in which they are in a minority is to support the development of the means of information. It was following a proposal from Western countries that Unesco's General Conference established an institution which was to provide practical assistance for communication development. Yet representatives for these countries say they fear that helping developing countries acquire their own means of communicating may weaken the freedom of the press in the world. It may be Governments which acquire increased means for their own propaganda, these representatives say, rather than new groups of people in urban or rural areas gaining increased opportunities to make themselves heard.

It is not difficult to refute these objections by pointing out the guidelines which have been established in the objectives, criteria and priorities of the IPDC. The programme has been specifically assigned to help particularly the weakest groups strengthen their capacity to communicate. But an answer in terms of concrete experience from the programme as well seems to be called for.

When the IPDC was founded, representatives from the industrialized countries frequently stated that they wanted to see what the IPDC could accomplish in reality before they could decide whether to support the institution with funding. This was a problematic position, for until the institution had been granted funds with which to work it was not possible to produce concrete results.

But the IPDC did obtain some funding. Let us now see what the results have been in practice.

THE PROGRAMME IN PRACTICE

In the fourth operating year of the programme one hundred and forty seven communication projects were in progress in the countries of the Southern hemisphere with assistance from the IPDC special account. The IPDC had at that time projects in almost all the developing countries which belong to the poorest group. At the same time, work was in progress on about fifteen IPDC projects being financed with the help of Funds-in-Trust agreements. Over three hundred scholarship recipients from developing countries had the opportunity of attending courses in various communication subjects in the United States, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Republic of Korea and other countries within the framework of what the IPDC had to offer. Training or education in some form has proved to be a part of the vast majority of IPDC projects.

The IPDC inspired high expectations of prompt practical results. Much of the reason for establishing the programme was precisely the wish to get away from ideological debate and into a situation with increased emphasis on co-operative efforts for the concrete development of basic communication in the poorest countries. At the same time, there were those who still doubted whether the IPDC would in fact be able to shoulder this task. They feared that political disputes on information issues would crop up again in the new institution as well. For this reason it was important for the IPDC to get started on a practical working programme which could prove its usefulness.

At first it was easier to initiate certain regional and inter-regional projects. During the second half of the 1970s Unesco had arranged several regional conferences in the Third World on communication issues. Concrete proposals for co-operative measures had been put forward at these conferences, and some of the proposals had already been pursued beyond the stage of preliminary discussions. Thus there were regional projects the IPDC could consider without having to wait for applications from Member States. There were also good reasons for concentrating on regional measures in the beginning, in order to achieve the best possible distributional effect with the limited funds available.

Most of these projects had to do with support for the reciprocal exchange of news, programmes and other information among groups of developing countries. Typical examples are PANA, the pan-African news agency, ANN, the Asian news network, and ALASEI, the Latin American agency for special information. These three arrangements were initiated because the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America were dependent on the major international news agencies even for information from and about other countries in their own part of the world. The aim was not to replace or bar the services of the international agencies, but to supplement them with regional exchanges of news. For that reason PANA, ANN and ALASEI are not news agencies in the usual meaning of the term. They do not have their own correspondent networks supplying a central editing office with news and information by the minute around the clock.

ALASEI aims to offer special services which are not covered by the major news agencies. This project has met with considerable resistance from private media organizations in Latin America. ANN and PANA (and ASIN in South America) follow the pattern which has become common for efforts concerning news transmission among developing countries. They are exchange arrangements more than anything else. Each of the national agencies which is involved is to send in a certain number of words daily, which are then sent on to all the other participants. And each agency is to receive a corresponding amount of information from each of the other in return. In practice, the results are strongly marked by the poverty of the participants. The IPDC has helped these exchange arrangements in their initial phases, as well as supporting similar regional measures regarding the exchange of films and television programmes. The Ghanaian communication researcher P.A.V. Ansah has carried out a study of PANA's first year of operation. He found that the agency sent out about 80 news items totalling 20.000 words every day. Only fifteen of the African member agencies sent in news daily. The fact that participation was so limited is not only due to deficient means of communication, but is affected by high cable rates as well. In addition to news from the African agencies, PANA transmitted news material from the organizations in the UN system and from the non-aligned news pool NANAP. PANA also provided its own news services, including coverage of inter-African conferences and of the General Conference of Unesco.

The Ghanaian Professor found that the types of material distributed

by PANA differed less from that supplied by international agencies than might be expected. Less than one-third of PANA's total services the first year dealt with development oriented subjects. The main emphasis was on political matters, such as African meetings and state visits. According to Professor Ansah, it would be worthwhile to study more closely whether PANA in the future concentrates its attention on the social and political elite, as the traditional news agencies do, or whether the idea that ordinary people can promote development as well gains ground. Likewise, it would be useful to check how much of the material comes from the capital cities and how much from people in remote districts. (Ansah, 1984). There is at present a tendency for increased IPDC support to be granted for training and education in order to develop a high professional standard for the material which is exchanged.

Inter-regional projects were also a part of the IDPC's initial activities. One of these projects was an experiment for the purpose of exchanging programmes via communication satellites between the broadcasting organizations of Asia and Africa. Both of the major satellite systems Intelsat and Intersputnik participated in this experiment. It took place in the spring of 1983 and has since been followed up by new attempts to create permanent exchange arrangements with the help of the experience which had been gained.

A second project of global dimensions which is supported by the IPDC is an attempt to make modern communication technology more suitable for remote districts in the countries of the Third World. This project is being carried out by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The aim is to develop a combination of communication satellites and simple, inexpensive ground stations so that the remote districts can acquire multi-directional tele-services of various kinds without having to wait for the expensive construction of a cable network from the capital city.

During the first three-year period, 20 per cent of the IPDC funding was used for inter-regional projects. 30 per cent of the remaining 80 per cent went to Africa, 24 per cent to South and Central America, 14 per cent to the Arab countries and 12 per cent to Asia. The emphasis on Africa harmonizes fully with the priorities of the IPDC. The fact that Asia received such a small share in the initial period is probably related to the fact that there were few applications from Asian countries at first. India, for example,

considered itself a donor to the IPDC rather than a recipient, at least to begin with.

Only three per cent of the total funds administered by the IPDC during the first period was contributed directly to newspaper and publishing activities, whereas some 10 per cent was allocated to telecommunications. The remainder of the support was distributed approximately equally among the development of press agencies, the expansion of radio and television, and activities carried out by research and educational institutions. A good one-third of IPDC appropriations was used for equipment. IPDC funds in the first period were otherwise used for need analysis, planning, research and education, with the primary emphasis on education.

The IPDC has gradually begun to support more varied projects, emphasizing the use of the media to promote practical development. The programme contributes to efforts in Columbia to improve the conditions of existence for small publishing and printing firms. In Venezuela, the IPDC is supporting a communication experiment which aims to encourage peasant farmers to influence the shaping of agricultural policies. A project the IPDC is supporting in Mexico aims at developing educational material which is to help school children use the mass media with critical awareness. Assistance from the IPDC has been used in Botswana to improve conditions for the existence of an independent newspaper. In Kenya, the IPDC is helping educate teachers to teach about communication in rural communities. In Bangladesh the IPDC supports a programme for the development of local newspapers in rural areas.

The IPDC is supporting experiments carried out by FIEJ, the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, to produce paper from the kenaf plant. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been granted funds from the IPDC for testing the use of mass media in work for public health in developing countries. Six countries in South-east Asia are involved in the trial project to begin with, a project which aims at teaching media personnel to convey health information. In 1984, half of the IPDC projects were still regional or inter-regional. But there was a clear tendency towards an increase in the proportion of national projects -that is, projects carried out within a single country.

The IPDC does not carry out any projects itself. In some instances execution is entrusted to Unesco or other specialized agencies in the UN system, such as the International Telecommunications Union or the Universal Postal Union. As far as projects financed with the help of Funds-in-Trust agreements are concerned, a specialized agency is always responsible for the execution. In other instances an international non-governmental organization may be in charge of the work. But in most projects which receive support from the IPDC special account the recipients implement the programme themselves. Projects are often carried out by local or regional institutions in the Third World which have already been established and made themselves known in their area.

It is, then, people in and from the developing country concerned who are responsible for carrying out the new measures, and who gain experience by so doing. IPDC support thus has little of the paternalistic aspect which often accompanies development aid ; it is not the donor who is in charge. The IPDC limits itself to offering the guidance which is requested and to monitoring projects to ensure that funds are used in accordance with the contract. And it should be stressed once more that the IPDC is not an organ which is foreign to the developing countries. Their own representatives form a majority in the Council. If appropriated funds are not used in a responsible manner, then the recipients are breaking rules which they themselves have taken part in setting up on an equal basis with other representatives.

Funding from the IPDC seldom covers more than a small share of the cost of a project. As a rule the recipients have to cover most of the cost themselves, from their own means and/or with contributions from other sources. This may seem problematic. Is it not unwise to spread small amounts among many projects ? Is there a risk of initiating projects which will never be satisfactorily carried out ? It is obvious that this risk exists. But a grant may be useful even if it is small. It may be used for parts of a project which may be seen independently and have lasting value, regardless of whether the rest of the project is carried out. Or this small grant may be just the decisive contribution for the completion of a project which otherwise would not have been finished. In considering the applications submitted, the IPDC has tried to use its limited resources for just such viable projects. The IPDC support may function as help for self-help. It may function as seed money, providing just

the financial basis or the professional assistance which makes it possible to generate other resources as well.

The Council has adopted rules as to who is entitled to submit applications for support. If it is a question of a national project, whether it be private or governmental, the application must be sent with recommendations from the authorities who are responsible for that country's relations with Unesco. If the project is regional or inter-regional, the application must have the support of several countries in the region or regions concerned.

Applications may also be submitted by UN specialized agencies or other inter-governmental organizations. Finally, international non-governmental organizations having consultative status with Unesco may apply for funding. Beyond these regulations, the Council appropriates a small amount which the secretariat, with the agreement of the chairman of the Council, may use for purposes of training and information.

However, getting an inter-governmental Council of 35 representatives to evaluate applications critically from their own regions or countries is no simple task. It is more pleasant to say yes than to say no. As the IPDC has become involved in practical activities, it has become necessary to devote increased thought to the entire procedure for considering applications and following up on projects. This process consists of three phases : evaluation of a project before the application is considered by the Council, monitoring the execution of the project, and evaluation of the results which have or have not been achieved. In order to have sufficient time for the preliminary preparations, the Council has determined that applications must be submitted at least six months before the Council meeting which is to consider them. Guidelines have been drawn up showing the types of information required.

Any application which touches on one of the areas of concern of other specialized agencies within the UN system is placed before the organization in question. At its fifth meeting, in May 1984, the Council requested that the secretariat methodically check each project proposal against the list of priorities and criteria which have been established for funding from the IPDC prior to consideration of applications by the Council. In doing so, the secretariat is required to seek assistance from consultants not only within Unesco but from

professional environments outside the organization as well. The secretariat may also benefit from the contact group which has been established with the other specialized agencies which are interested in the work of the IPDC.

Finally, experience shows that the Bureau has acquired an important role, both during and between the Council meetings. At Council meetings, both projects and procedures are discussed in commissions in which all of the member countries of the Council are represented. But the final budget and working programme are adopted following a recommendation by the Bureau. In an organ such as the IPDC, which does not carry out projects itself, it seems wise to place the main emphasis on a thorough evaluation of applications and consideration of the projects before funds are appropriated. But learning from experience is also important. For that reason in 1984 the Bureau initiated a study of guidelines for the evaluation of projects both during the implementation process and upon completion.

During the first three years all of the activities of the IPDC, then, have dealt with practical communication development in the Third World -raising funds, evaluating the need for support and appropriating grants. There has been less time for the other functions of co-ordination, studies and information. A few decisions made by the Council in 1984 may serve to strengthen the efforts of the IPDC in these areas.

In the first place, a decision was made to initiate a study, to be financed by special means, of the possibilities of a separate data base for the IPDC on international co-operation in communication development. The hope is that this type of instrument will be able to supply the IPDC with the information which it needs to fulfil its co-ordinating function in the international community. The Council also decided to initiate a preparatory study on a periodical report on global communication development, which should include data on the media situation in the various countries and regions, the international exchange of information, the development of new technology and international development assistance in this field. Lastly, it may be worth mentioning that the Council agreed to establish a special IPDC-Unesco prize for rural communication. This prize is to be awarded to persons or institutions who have made particularly valuable contributions to the promotion of the use of local

media, the use of traditional forms of communication, or the development of better ways of using communication technology to the advantage of rural societies. In March 1985, the first prize was presented to the Kheda Communication Project in India.

The International Programme for the Development of Communication has thus become a reality. It is too early yet to form a well-informed opinion as to what role the IPDC will play in the development of media infra-structures in the Third World. But the IPDC has at least got started without encountering any of the obstacles of which Western countries had warned from the beginning.

- The IPDC was asked to avoid over-politicization.
- The Council has never embarked on an ideological war of words.
- The IPDC was asked to concentrate on practical tasks.
- The IPDC has done so.
- The IPDC was warned against divisive votes.
- All decisions have been reached by consensus.

So far none of the appropriations granted by the IPDC has been the subject of unfavourable criticism. We shall see in the time to come whether the IPDC has succeeded in committing itself to projects which are better oriented to meet the basic communication needs of poor peoples than many of the projects which have previously been the result of international transfers of communication technology.

Procuring funds from member countries remains a major problem for the IPDC. In this connection there may be reason to cite the speech of the US representative at the IPDC Council's fifth session. His speech is of particular interest as the United States at this time had decided to withdraw from Unesco. The American representative reminded the Council that the United States wished to continue to co-operate in the activities related to Unesco which are productive and well-administered. The IPDC is one of the best of these, he said.

We shall see. The time leading up to the creation of the IPDC is full of examples of well-meant declarations which have not been followed by

practical actions. Words are needed. But if we wish to assist those who today lack the means for getting their words heard, then action is needed as well.

IV. CONCLUSION

Professor Hamid Mowlana, who is the head of international communication studies at the American University in Washington, wrote the following in a recent study :

"The fact that 'the vessel of sovereignty' is leaking, and in some instances may even be sinking, is now beyond doubt. Nations may act as though they are in control of their full national rights, but the erosion of sovereignty through communication technology and new transnational actors is paralleled by the growing constraints on freedom of national action and the increasing responsibility of international organizations. As the locus of decision-making is continuously transferred from national to international and transnational levels, an increasing number of issues will have to be settled in an international environment, or increasing conflict is inevitable. Thus, international organizations, particularly those dealing with communication and information issues, are likely to become a more central force in international relations". (Mowlana, 1985).

The perspective in the preceding chapters has for the most part been limited to communication issues having to do with the mass media. For the sake of clarity it may be worthwhile to attempt to summarize some of the most important conclusions of this discussion. We must try to see the relation between problem areas which are often perceived independently : the gap between North and South, questions of freedom and responsibility, and the choice of communication technology for the countries of the Third World, to mention a few key concepts.

There is wide-spread agreement at present that communication between North and South follows a unidirectional pattern. The flow of information is from North to South -apart from transnational data on resources and markets, which are gathered in the North from all areas of the world. This pattern may be observed in one area after another, whether considering the flow of news, data transmission or cultural and scientific activities. Production and distribution of information thus correspond to a pattern which is familiar in world trade. Developing countries supply the industrialized countries with raw materials and purchase expensive finished products in return. There is a much better

balance in the pattern of exchange among the industrialized countries. Among the developing countries, on the other hand, very little exchange of information takes place, whether it be in the form of news, data, cultural exchanges or contacts between peoples. The dominant feature of the global situation is that developing countries are dependent on an international distribution of news which is controlled by the North.

When the flow of news is considered separately, this transmission from North to South through the major international agencies is the distinctive feature. It is also striking that the media primarily convey news about societies which are closest to their own geographically, politically and culturally. A third characteristic is that occurrences in Western Europe and the United States are granted most space in international news coverage, whereas Eastern Europe and the developing countries receive less attention. Due to the tendency to give coverage to violence and conflict at the expense of social processes, developing countries are seldom granted a place in the news picture until there is bloodshed.

However, it would be wrong to place the entire blame for this distortion of reality on the international news agencies. Recent research has shown that when national agencies determine what is to be transmitted to their domestic customers of the news services they receive from external sources, they strentthen the tendency to filter out development oriented material and to concentrate on violence. The same process is then repeated in the editorial offices of the individual newspapers. The further one moves down the news "funnel", the stronger is the concentration on conflict. For that reason it is not possible to cope with the distortion of reality in the media without taking a stand on the values and criteria which form the basis for the selection of news throughout the process. (Gerbner et al., 1980).

The influence of the media in the world today produces certain negative effects which are by no means limited to developing countries. For years communication researcher George Gerbner has studies the psychological effects of American television programmes. (Gerbner et al. 1980). He has demonstrated that these programmes convey a discriminatory image of women, minority groups and old people and that they depict a human society with ten times the amount of violence which exists in the real world. Gerbner thus shows that

those who watch a lot of television in the United States receive a severely distorted picture of reality. And what is even worse, they have a tendency to accept this picture as the true one and to express particularly discriminatory attitudes themselves. Gerbner has found that people who watch a lot of television in the United States often perceive the world as more violent and dangerous than it actually is.

It may be pertinent to pose the question of what is cause and what is effect ; perhaps people with tendencies towards just these types of prejudices are the one who watch television the most ? Gerbner has tried to remove this source of unreliability by comparing people who watch a lot and people who watch very little television within a large number of different age, income, educational and social groups. At the same time, other research has shown that it is the weakest groups which most often choose not to watch quality programmes but prefer action films and light entertainment. It is indeed thought-provoking that the greater the choice people are offered, the more the weakest groups choose not to watch informative or cultural programmes. Gerbner's results also fall in line with a series of exhaustive studies which show that media violence increases the level of violence in society. These problems are in principle the same for both industrialized countries and developing countries.

In developing countries, however, the new media have also given rise to another type of problem. The expectation was that radio and television would help "modernize" the countries of the Third World and stimulate economic growth. But in the wake of imported programmes there was a move to imitate Western clothes and life styles, to abandon traditional skills and working methods, and to move from the countryside to the cities. Did the new media have to be accompanied by this type of cultural strain ?

Radical social critics have pointed out that radio and television spread Western patterns of consumption and stimulate motives for personal gain. As entertainment programmes and advertising motivate people in the poor countries to strive for foreign patterns of material consumption, these countries become even more dependent on Western economies. If national independence requires that developing countries manage to break out of the vicious circle in which raw materials are exchanged for finished products, then it may appear as though the contents of the mass media today are undermining this process of achieving independence.

However, there is no law of nature stating that the media must function in this manner. The negative effects are not a result of the inherent nature of the media. They result from the content the mass media today are used to convey. It is possible to use them in other ways, such as for general educaton, cultural promotion or social criticism, or to strengthen awareness of the shared tasks facing the human race -to mention just a few alternatives. The media are in fact used for such purposes, or this study could not have been written. It is primarily a question of changing priorities in the direction of increased emphasis on a media content which can help human beings understand the world in which we live and in solving our problems through joint efforts -as well as resistance to media vulgarization, brutality and conformity.

The communication researchers Elihu Katz and George Wedell, who in 1977 published a pioneer study of broadcasting in the Third World, were struck by the degree of homogeneity in the choice of programming throughout the world. Generally speaking, the same types of programmes are to be found everywhere. Television is considered a complete package in which the content is linked to the technology. Once a country has obtained a transmitting and receiving system for television, it becomes almost a foregone conclusion that its broadcasting time is to be filled with the same types of pastime as those prevailing in the countries the technology derives from. This need not be the case. Television may be seen as a medium with unlimited possibilities, also in terms of creating new means of expression and conveying local cultural values.

In the Northern hemisphere, the television screen has become the family cinema in the sitting-room. Katz and Wedell remind us that people in developing countries live out-of-doors. This at once opens up the possibility of television serving a function entirely different from that which it serves in the industrialized countries, namely as a collective viewing experience in the marketplace of a village. And that requires substantially different programme content than police shows or "Dynasty".

The fear of television bombardment from foreign communication satellites is not wholly appropriate in this connection. In the first place, the technical means of directing the signals from the satellites -the "footprint"- to the target area have been dramatically improved. In the second place, intentional spill-over to other countries may be regulated by means of both interna-

tional agreements and national legislation. And in the third place (and most important), Katz and Wedell document a number of instances of locally produced programmes being the most popular.

Television may become a means of promoting national culture in developing countries if local producers manage to develop an artistic idiom which gives expression to traditional skills and modes of communicating. But that requires the use of local cultural resources, local initiators and local groups of people in programming, so that topics which interest and affect people in a way which they understand and appreciate may be presented. (Katz and Wedell, 1977). Unfortunately, this is seldom the case today.

The evidence presented here does not give any reason to recommend that developing countries concentrate on television. Radio is still by far the most suitable, economical and pliable mass medium in terms of creating communication possibilities for large groups of people in the poorest countries. Television has thus far been available to the elites in the cities for the most part, and it has contributed to increasing rather than diminishing the differences between social groups, thus increasing the problems in the countries in which it has been introduced. But the tendency is to continue to develop television systems. In some countries, such as India, this is being done by means of a satellite system which does not make it any more expensive to achieve contact with an isolated village than with the suburbs around New Delhi. When a country decides to concentrate on developing television services, it is extremely important what pattern of development and programme type are chosen.

Recognition of the importance of these choices is also highly significant for international co-operation in communication development in the Third World. Up to the present, nearly all transfers of technology have taken place on a bilateral basis and on commercial terms or as a combination of aid and business. This means that the interests of the exporting countries have had a strong influence on the choice of technology.

Efforts to promote the choice of suitable communication structures for the countries of the Third World are thus under attack on two fronts. On the one hand, they are under pressure in the form of commercially motivated

offers from the major exporting countries. On the other hand, they are under pressure from the elites in the developing countries, who are fascinated by advanced communication technology and may reject more appropriate technology for reasons of prestige.

In Swedish development aid circles, the question has been raised as to whether conditions should be imposed on media aid such that recipient countries are required to use it to meet democratic communication needs, such as developing local radio broadcasting in rural areas. This is in essence a logical extension of the Nordic countries' wish to choose partner countries which are committed to socially motivated development and distribution policies. The weakness in this type of policy -at least if it is carried out in detail- is that the donor can easily come to dominate.

The International Programme for the Development of Communication opens up a different way of influencing the choice of structures and models with a view to making the media organs for the liberation and development of peoples. Developing countries have a majority in the administrative organs of the IPDC. To the extent that the IPDC succeeds in adopting aid criteria such as self-reliance, local participation, priority for the poorest groups, etc., the developing countries' own representatives have taken part in drawing up these guidelines. These conditions are not forced upon them by outsiders, much less by superiors. Progressive aims such as these do indeed find support among representatives from the developing countries.

In a multilateral forum such as the IPDC it is possible to establish practical principles for international co-operation in communication development by which receiver countries are morally and politically bound. And this is being done. It is too early yet to see how far the IPDC will develop this policy, but experience thus far has been encouraging. Future developments will depend among other things on the extent to which countries such as the Nordic ones support this attempt at a new international initiative in the field of communication.

What we now know about the strength of the impact of the mass media, whether for good or for bad, has another important consequence. It is no longer possible to exclude consideration of the content of the media from the agenda for

international co-operation. The mass media perform certain tasks which need to be fulfilled throughout the world, such as presenting realistic information about occurrences people ought to know about, acting as a formu for debates and promoting understanding,which can help us solve our mutual problems. We cannot do without the media today.

But these tasks are often very poorly carried out. Large groups of people have simply no access to the means of communication. The media are sometimes used to convey monotonous propaganda for Governments. In other cases media products are commercial articles, with a content which is devoid of reflection, but which sell better than more worthwhile programmes. This is particularly unfortuante for people in developing countries. The influences they import via the visual media and advertising are a serious strain on their traditional cultures and their efforts to mobilize the thrift and hard work that are required to improve their living conditions.

These issues concern international organizations. Unfortunately, most of the international debate on information issues has taken the form of controverses between East and West on the subject of freedom and censorship. It has seldom been possible to bring about a realistic exchange of views on an international level concerning issues such as : How can developing countries acquire media infra-structures which will be of use to ordinary people striving to overcome poverty ? How can we develop organs of communication which ensure that the media throughout the world dedicate more attention to the future tasks the human race will have to try to solve ? How can we help strengthen the independence of journalists, so that they will be better able to meet the needs of ordinary people -regardless of pressures from Governments and centres of power ? These questions are more than just words. They express concrete problems and unsolved conflicts which it may be dangerous to ignore.

The first two chapters of this study presented a survey and analysis of the debate which has taken place in the UN system from 1946 to the present concerning freedom of the press and distribution of information. The material which is discussed in these two chapters leads to an inevitable conclusion. Thirty to forty years ago the Governments in Western countries and the most influential representatives for the press in those same countries were much more willing to stress the societal responsibilities of the media on an international level than they are today.

At that time, all the Western countries supported the proposal for a Convention on the International Right of Correction. There was wide-spread agreement in favour of establishing an international committee which would be able to issue identification cards to journalists on dangerous assignments, on the condition that they pledged to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles of journalistic integrity. The Western countries supported a recommended draft for an international code of ethics for information personnel, in which they emphasized the fact that good journalistic conduct requires consideration of the public good. Most of these initiatives were instigated by Western press organizations. Since then, Western countries have changed their attitudes to these issues.

One of the reasons for this change is that influential media organizations in the United States decided that as far as international press issues were concerned they would be better served if Governments were not involved. They initiated a campaign which soon affected all attempts at drawing up international rules concerning the flow of information across national boundaries. Their attitude was that inter-governmental conferences should not make decisions about media activities. Their reasoning was that such decisions could open the way for later resolutions which would threaten private control and lead to government censorship. Led by the media in the United States the Western press eventually opposed any international attempt to consider even such a seemingly uncontroversial topic as measures to protect journalists. It made no difference that the issue had originally been raised at the request of the journalists' organizations. During the 1970s and the 1980s Unesco bore the brunt of this press campaign. And Western Governments largely followed the signals from their own press. They dissociated themselves from the point of view they themselves had held a few years earlier.

This attitude, rejecting all international negotiations on global mass communication, cannot be maintained in the long run. All Governments have media policies. No Government can avoid influencing media activities by means of laws, fiscal policies and government regulations. Meanwhile, the flow of information continues to transcend national boundaries. The need for international action is increasing, not only as far as allocating frequency bands and satellite capacity is concerned, but also to narrow the gap between South and North and to promote the contribution of the media towards solving the common problems facing mankind.

A demand for unlimited freedom for the media does not provide answers to these questions. If you take a trip in a northward direction, you need not keep going until you get to the North Pole. If Governments approve measures limiting the depiction of violence and penalizing the encouragement of hatred of foreigners, this does not mean that they will necessarily interfere in the free exchange of political opinions in the next round. It is possible to distinguish between commercial speculation in media violence and the need for an open debate on political and social issues. If we are unconditionally opposed to all international negotiations concerning media issues, we debar ourselves from taking part in a debate concerning tasks which can only be fulfilled through international co-operation.

For that reason, the question is whether Western countries ought not to move closer to the standpoint they adopted to the relationship between freedom and responsibility during the debate on the transmission of information in the world in the 1940s and 1950s. It may in fact contain an understanding of the issues which could be a constructive starting point for new international action. Several considerations seem to indicate that the practising journalists who are represented in the Western journalist organization (IFJ) would be in favour of a return to this basic standpoint. (Jones, 1980).

This standpoint included recognition of the fact that journalism is a service to society, that journalists have an obligation to provide ordinary readers and viewers with truthful and meaningful information. If they are to fulfil these tasks, they require freedon not only from the political authorities. They also need protection against the private monopolies which can oblige a media organization to refuse worthwhile news material because it does not promote sales and advertising revenues.

The codes of ethics which journalists themselves have adopted can help them maintain high professional standards. But journalists are under pressure from strong forces. They need guidelines for their work which ensure them genuine opportunities for practicing independent journalism. This, then, is the most demanding and difficult challenge for media policies in democratic countries : providing for a media structure which ensures the freedom of journalists in relation to both government censorship and the dictatorship of profit.

Developing countries have to a great degree inherited their media structures from their old colonial rulers. It is true that the countries of South and Central America did not copy the Spanish and Portuguese patterns. They followed the pattern from the United States for the most part, making both press and broadcasting the domain of private investment. The French and British colonies adopted the patterns of their colonial rulers, with radio and television in the French colonies under the direction of the central government, whereas the British colonies established separate broadcasting organizations under strong governmental control. In most cases, these structures have gradually been modified to suit the national political situation. The tendency has been to consider the media -and especially broadcasting- as instruments of power. When a political take-over takes place, the central broadcasting station, the airport and the residence of the president are the first locations to be occupied.

However, the question has been raised as to whether Governments in all developing countries would not gain in the long run by developing a certain "responsible distance" between the media organizations and Government offices. (Katz and Wedell, 1977). Such a distance between those who govern and those who transmit news about the Government is a necessary condition if readers and viewers are to have faith in the media. Thus it would be an advantage for all parties if the media were guaranteed independence in relation to the authorities and if it were recognized that both groups carry out important, but different tasks. The debate at the NAMEDIA conference in New Delhi in 1983 showed that these ideas are also gaining support within the non-aligned movement. (NAMEDIA, 1983).

It is essential to adopt a long-term perspective on media development in the Third World. Measures which may seem to benefit authoritarian rulers in the short run may prove to promote freedom of the press in a longer perspective. When people in a country gain access to local newspapers and broadcasting, they may also develop expectations that the new media be used to convey information which is socially relevant. When journalists acquire professional training and professional pride, they may wish to practise their profession without government interference. When those in position of power see that people do not trust media which lie about reality in their country, they may themselves perceive the value in freeing the media from political monitoring.

The media have a responsibility to society. But they can only fulfil this responsibility if those who write, edit and produce programmes have the freedom to follow their journalistic conscience. The responsibility of governments is to ensure that conditions in the media system are such that journalists truly have the opportunity to concentrate on meaningful content. Only then will they have freedom.

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